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Millionaire . . . p.11

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63rd year of publication

Perception trumps reality in Gaza

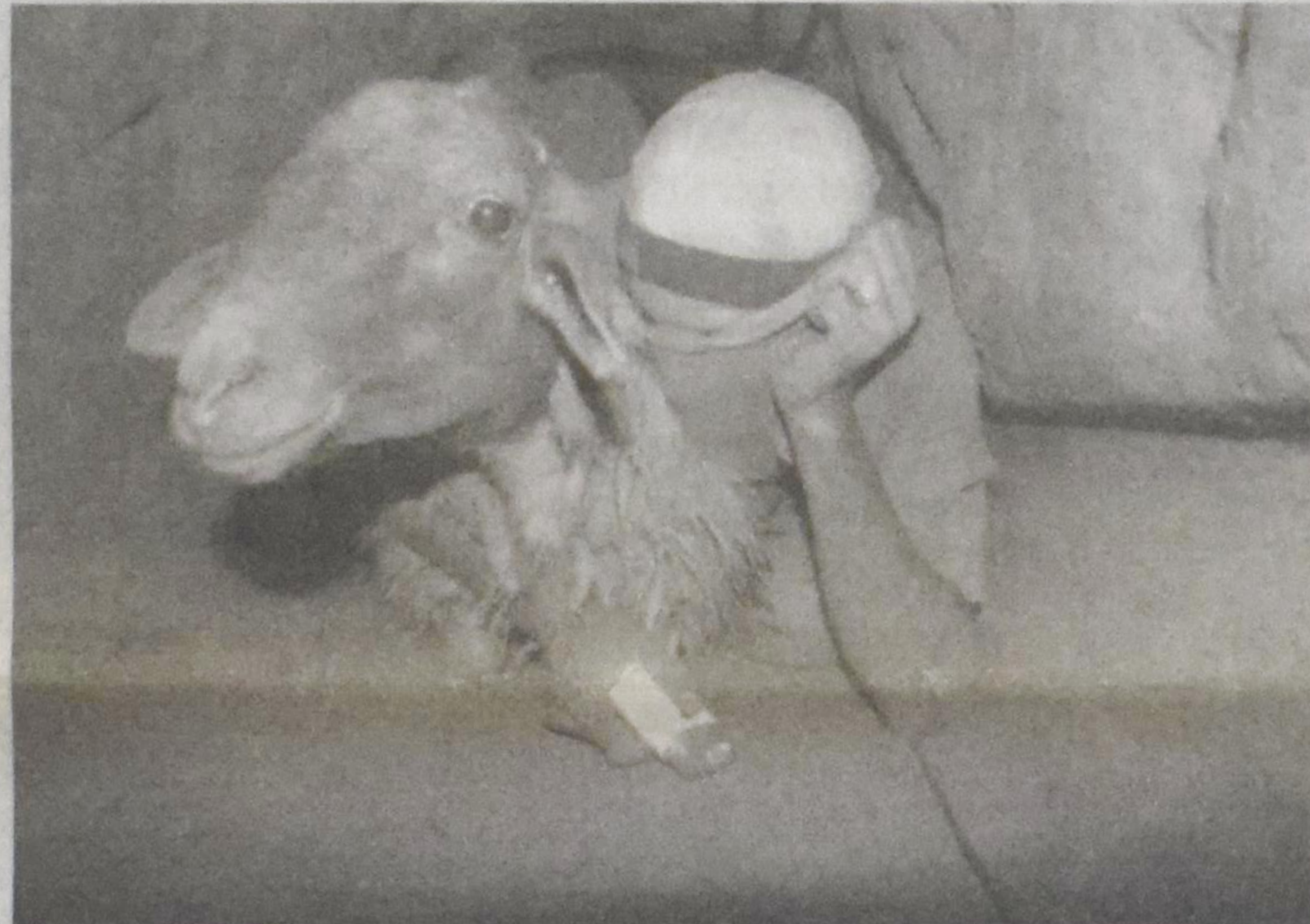
Dena Nicolai

CAIRO, Egypt – While in Jerusalem in the middle of the recent Israeli attacks on Gaza, a Jewish-Israeli shopkeeper told me, “What’s more important than reality is how people perceive reality – especially in this part of the world.” He wasn’t talking about Gaza specifically, but he might well have been. Perceptions and perspectives on the December-January Israeli air and ground assault and on the general Israeli-Palestinian conflict have always shaped what the conflict looks like on the ground.

In Egypt, Gaza’s closest Arab neighbour and a country unavoidably embroiled in the tensions, opinions on Gaza are mixed. The Rafah border between Egypt and Gaza is a continual point of contention, as Israel has accused Egypt of not doing enough to secure the border and stop weapons smuggling through tunnels built by those on both sides. Egypt’s peace treaty with Israel, signed in 1979, and the related aid Egypt receives from Western countries, means that President Hosni Mubarak has been more than reluctant to open the border, both during the Israeli assault, and now.

Egyptian reactions

Many Egyptians align with activists and bloggers such as Philip Rizk (see bar below). They are



Sandstone tunnels between Gaza and Egypt are a conduit for food, medicine, livestock, and weapons (photo by B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights group).

furiously, and much of their anger has been directed towards the Egyptian government for what was seen as President Mubarak’s inaction in his refusal to open Rafah to Gazans hoping to flee the bombardment, or to aid convoys trying to bring desperately needed food and medicine in. These were the Egyptians who staged mass protests in cities and towns across the country in the midst of the attacks, and were sometimes beaten or arrested by riot police as a result.

Of course, anger is also directed towards Israel. When I asked a taxi driver in Cairo for his opinion, he

answered with, “I’m angry. Of course I’m angry. It’s like this: If you have a child, and he disobeys you, do you kill him? No. Maybe you slap his hand, maybe you punish him, but you don’t kill him.”

Power and powerlessness

There are also those I’ve spoken with who have stayed far away from any demonstrations, and who, while sympathizing with the Gazans themselves, have expressed strong contempt towards Hamas, calling them “stupid” and uncaring about Palestinian lives, and blaming them for escalating the situation.

Others in Cairo simply say, “Of course it’s horrible. I’m depressed. I don’t watch TV anymore, I don’t listen to the news. I don’t want to talk about it.” But despite the variety of opinions, there is a general feeling of helplessness among Egyptians. As a friend said, “What am I supposed to do? No one will listen to me if I protest – and if they do, then maybe I’ll just get arrested. Anyways, Egypt has enough problems of its own to worry about.”

As I write this, we are five weeks past the official end of the Israeli bombardment, and the protests in

Egypt are dying down. Hamas and Israel are in the midst of a ceasefire that has already been violated in numerous ways by both sides, and current peace talks in Cairo are stalling over discussions on prisoner release and exchange – an issue that was not supposed to be on the table in this current situation. The people of Gaza remain trapped in their prison, one of the most densely populated pieces of land on earth, with borders between Gaza and Egypt and between Gaza and Israel only occasionally being opened to transports of desperately needed aid and medical supplies.

Under the bombardment

While political realities and peace talk manoeuvring go on in Cairo, stories continue to trickle out of Gaza.

A Dutch mission worker I met in Jerusalem told me of
See Gaza on page 2

Censored on campus:

Pro-life students face legal charges for graphic display



Controversial pro-life display on the University of Calgary campus.

Sara Gerritsma De Moor

Members of the Campus Pro-Life (CPL) group at the University

of Calgary have been charged with trespassing after they refused to follow university guidelines for their

anti-abortion display on campus. In November, CPL organized the display of large posters featuring graphic photos of aborted fetuses alongside images portraying the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide, and acts of the Klu Klux Klan. The display, called the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP), draws analogies between these well-known genocides and what the group considers the lesser-recognized genocide of millions of aborted babies. Members of the Campus Pro-Life group are always present at the display to answer questions and engage onlookers in conversation about their message.

Campus Pro-Life has displayed
See Censored on page 2

إطلقوا سراح فيليب رزق!

Free Philip Rizk!



In recent weeks, numerous pro-Gaza activists and bloggers have been arrested, including Philip Rizk, an Egyptian-German who lived in Gaza from 2005 to 2007 and who has written for *Sojourners* and *Christianity Today*. Rizk has since been released, most likely due to international pressure and his dual-nationality, but other detainees have disappeared into the black hole that is the Egyptian justice system.

These protestors were arrested under archaic Egyptian emergency laws, which have been in place for over 25 years, and which have long been used to detain dissenters and others who criticize the government.

News

Censored ... continued from p.1

the Genocide Awareness Project on the University of Calgary's campus five times since 2005. Last October, when the group informed the university of its intent to set up the display again in November, the university administration met with CPL to outline new conditions. The university told the group that their signs had to be turned to face inward, so that passersby who did not want to view

the large, vivid photos could avoid being confronted with them.

Campus Pro-Life refused to abide by these restrictions, arguing that the new orientation for the signs constituted censorship of their pro-life message by the university. At that point, legal counsel for the university informed the members of CPL that they were prohibited from setting up their display on campus, and

warned of legal action if they refused to comply. The group set up their display in November without incident, but when they informed the university in February of their intent to set it up again in the spring, members of CPL were charged with trespassing for the November event.

Other repercussions

On February 10, the CPL group attended a special hearing of the University of Calgary Student's Union (SU) during which the SU decided to revoke the official club status of Campus Pro-Life. This loss of official sanction by the SU means that the group will no longer receive funding from the SU and Campus Pro-Life will not be permitted to participate in club fairs and other SU events designed to raise awareness of the various clubs available on campus.

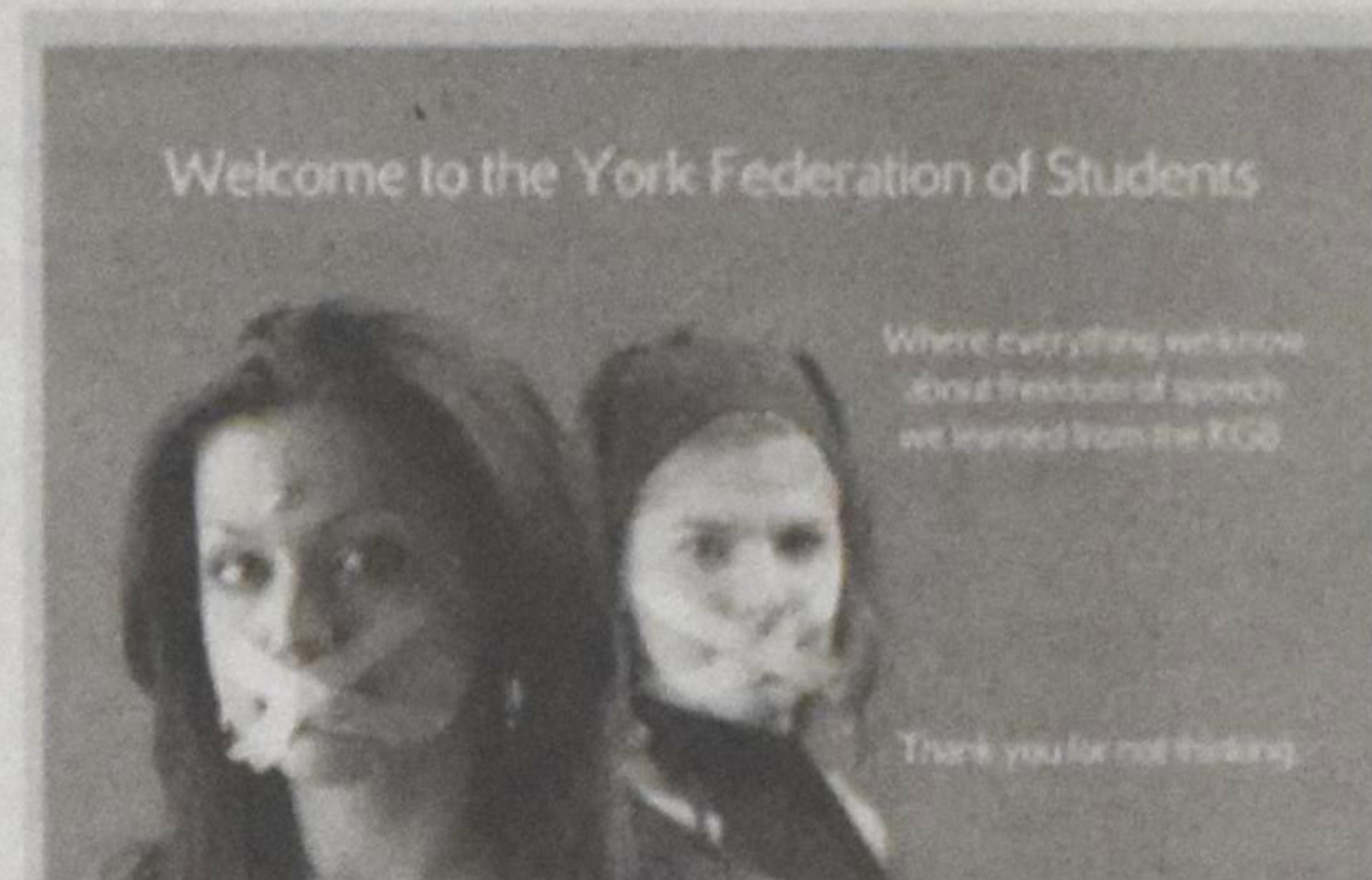
Leah Hallman is the president of the Campus Pro-Life group at the University of Calgary, and was charged with trespassing along with five other CPL members. For Hallman and the CPL, the actions of the university constitute censorship and discrimination based on their ideas, not because of the graphic method of displaying them, as the university argues. To prove her point, Hallman cites an example from last November. When CPL was displaying the GAP presentation on campus, another group had a presentation set up about 30 feet away to raise awareness about the persecution of the Falun Gong in China. Their display included equally disturbing depictions of torture and other atrocities, with pictures facing outward. As Hallman says, "the issue is not the graphic methods we use to get our message across; the issue is with our message."

Mixed message

In a letter sent to the CPL group in October warning of potential legal action, Paul A. Beke, the university's legal counsel, stated that "the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms does not apply to universities." This confuses Hallman. In her first two years as an active member of CPL, she participated in its earlier GAP events. During previous on-campus displays, the university set up signs warning passersby of the nature of the upcoming photos. However, the signs also informed potential protesters that the group's presence there was protected by the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

When asked about the effect that their GAP display may have on women who are traumatized from having had an abortion, Hallman expresses compassion for the women, yet remains firm in her belief that their displays are necessary in order to prevent more women

Sara Gerrijsma De Moor has just completed an MA in Philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. She is an associate minister with the CRC campus ministry at the University of Toronto. This article was written with information from U of C's Gauntlet newspaper, and an interview with Leah Hallman.



In 2008, York University's Federation of Students blocked club status for its pro-life group, prompting this poster by the Western Standard.

Shutting down discussion on Canadian university campuses

2000: University of British Columbia blocks GAP from setting up its pro-life display on campus, threatening a \$60,000 fine.

2007: University of Guelph Student Association refuses to accredit pro-life group because its message "offends women."

2008: York University Federation of Students votes to severely restrict pro-life campus organizations, and cancels an on-campus debate about abortion.

2008: Lakehead University bans a pro-life group from handing out leaflets or engaging in "unsolicited conversation." Its displays must be "positive" in order to get club status.

Gaza ... continued from page 1

his friends, Palestinian Christians from a village in Gaza. They had received rare permission to travel to the West Bank – to Bethlehem – for Christmas, and had left prior to the beginning of the Israeli offensive. While they were still in Bethlehem the bombardment began, but the family's visa was about to expire. They knew they could not return home, so instead the father of the family was facing certain arrest and indefinite detainment by Israeli authorities for overstaying his visa. All he could do was wait helplessly for news from loved ones still in the midst of the war zone.

Others, including Philip Rizk, reported the story of Dr. Izzeldeen Abuelaish, a doctor and peace advocate who has been bridge-building between Israel and Gaza for years. Just a day before the official ceasefire was declared, an Israeli shell hit Dr. Abuelaish's house, killing three of his daughters and one of his nieces, all teenagers. There has been little response from the Israelis thus far, though the incident is currently under investigation.

Many here in Cairo have family and friends in Gaza, and they waited in anxious grief during the attacks, unable to reach those in the midst of the violence. Some are still waiting, still unsure of precisely where their loved ones are, or if they are even alive.

Between Hamas and a hard place

Although many, particularly in Israel and North America, place much of the blame for the recent attacks on Hamas, perceptions by Egyptians and Palestinians of what Hamas has been for Gaza are important. Gazans are often criticized for freely and fairly electing Hamas in 2006, but the perception during the time of the election (which certainly seemed true) and the current belief today is that Hamas is what some call "the only game in town." If your choice was between the corrupt Fatah party, which you had watched siphon your money and do nothing but make empty



Protestors flanked by riot police in Cairo.

PHOTO BY NASSER NURI

promises, and Hamas, who had vowed to pay government employees and provide food and other aid (and who had followed through on parts of these promises prior to their election), who would you have chosen? In the midst of the Gaza bombardment, when the death toll was already up to 800 Palestinians (to reach over 1300 by the time a ceasefire was declared), I sat in the back of a taxi in East Jerusalem and listened to the Palestinian taxi driver:

"Look. I am not even religious – I don't pray, I'm not a strong Muslim. But I support Hamas. Who else can we support? Fatah? They are all [corrupt]. And Abu Mazen [Palestinian Authority leader Mah-moud Abbas] is too weak. He cannot do anything for us."

The reality may be that Israel has dealt a horrific blow to the people of Gaza, but the important perception among both Egyptians and Gazans seems to be that Hamas will be instrumental in helping to rebuild. One Egyptian columnist I spoke to was very critical of Hamas, strongly condemning their rocket attacks and what he saw as their useless and "idiotic" claims to victory following the ceasefire. However, he ended with, "Of course I don't like Hamas. But if people here and in Gaza haven't completely stopped supporting them, then what has Israel done except kill 1300 people?" Of course a similar question can be asked of Hamas and their rocket attacks on Israel, but in the end, many Egyptians and Palestinians alike are left crying out, as one Gazan woman did to Al Jazeera reporters, "Why is Palestinian blood so cheap?"



Dena Nicolai is originally from Edmonton, Alberta, and is a graduate of Dordt College, in Sioux Center, Iowa. She is currently working and volunteering in Cairo, Egypt, and has spent time traveling throughout the Middle East through her work with the Middle East Studies Program of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities.

and babies from being victimized. "We always make the clarification that we're not condemning people; we're condemning the action. We must treat these women with grace. Yes, it will be difficult for women who have experienced abortions to view these pictures. But we face the unfortunate necessity of prioritizing lives over feelings."

"We all have blood on our hands," Hallman argues. "We contribute to abortions by omission, by refusing to take a stand." In her experiences presenting the GAP on campuses in both Canada and the United States, she notices a distinct difference between the way each university population responds. "In the U.S., people approach us with one view or the other. At least they know where they stand on abortion. In Canada, students are more apathetic. They don't even care enough to take one position or the other."

Facing trespassing charges in court on February 27, Leah

Hallman is not about to back down in the face of pressure from the university. Though her idealistic view of university as a place to engage in discussion of controversial matters is shattered, her desire to fight for the rights of the unborn is not. CPL plans to present GAP on the university campus again this spring. "We will not let fear rule our actions."



News

Obama 'Love in' in Canada's capital

Harold Alkema

President Barack Obama's seven-hour whirlwind tour of Ottawa produced warm feelings, numerous sound-bites, and little else for those hoping for real progress in Canadian-American relations.

The eloquent, charismatic and photogenic Obama won over Canadian crowds, press and politicians by praising Canada's "awesomeness" and by gushing, "I love this country." About 2,000 people showed up to see the American President. Some commentators pointed out that this was well short of the 10,000 that appeared for John F. Kennedy's visit in 1961. The visit provided other historical parallels. Some noted that this seemed to be a return to the days of American-Canadian friendship as embodied in the Reagan-Mulroney era.

To his credit, Prime Minister Harper showed a willingness to work with Obama. There was not even a hint of the jealousy that John Diefenbaker had for JFK when his popularity eclipsed that of the Canadian Prime Minister. Today Obama is more popular among Canadians than any domestic politician.

Besides all the *bonhomie*, however, not much seemed to happen. Jim Steinberg, the White House deputy press secretary, told reporters that "there were, obviously, a very good series of meetings." There was no official word on any breakthrough made in the areas of trade protectionism or the conflict in Afghanistan, two very serious issues that threaten US-Canadian partnership. The President appeared to downplay these matters.

Obama's visit may be the beginning of something concrete; perhaps real agreements on trade and foreign policy will come later. If nothing else, his presence signals a change from the sometimes icy relations between the two countries that characterized George W. Bush's presidency. When Bush arrived in the nation's capital in 2004, he was met by protesters rather than well-wishers.

On a less serious note, Press Secretary Steinberg also praised the lunch served to President Obama and his entourage. Apparently the American President devoured a meal that displayed our nation's diversity: Atlantic salmon, Arctic Char, and bison from the Prairies. One wonders if the Bloc Quebecois will protest the lack of French-Canadian content at the feast. (No poutine? No Montreal Smoked Meat? An outrage!)

Another culinary incident occurred when President Obama made a surprise visit to a local bakery to purchase cookies. Since then, the bakery has enjoyed popularity for its "Obama cookies." The press also noted that Obama enjoyed a Beaver Tail, a local pastry that is a favourite of Hillary Clinton, Obama's one-time Democratic leadership rival and current Secretary of State. Trade agreements?



Who needs 'em. At least Obama left Canada with a full stomach.

Harold Alkema is a researcher working in Ottawa. He does not really claim to know what Obama ate while in Ottawa.

What U.S. commentators are saying:

"All eyes are on Ottawa now – you don't hear that everyday."

CNN Anchor Kyra Philips

"Ottawa is white, and the snow's still coming down ... police are on snowmobiles. Canal Rideau is frozen over, and there are people ice skating on it."

American Blogger Jason Djang trying to "set the scene" of Ottawa in February

"President Obama took his first foreign trip today as president up to Canada. He met with the prime minister to discuss one of the greatest threats facing our nation today – Canadian geese."

Tonight Show host Jay Leno

Rights, freedom and justice

(A former student of Professor Koyzis asked him to elaborate on a response he gave in the February 9 issue of C.C. to the question "Is freedom from poverty a human right?" This column honours that request. Ed.)

In our post-Christian society, appeals to human rights have become the functional equivalent of the biblical prophets' "thus saith the Lord." They are treated as the final word on a subject, and those disputing such appeals are likely to be marginalized as heretics. In such a climate, some people are tempted to give up altogether on the concept of rights, simply because so many tend to use it as a justification for subjective wants. Yet the abuse of something cannot rule out its legitimate use. There are two foundational problems with the current legal climate surrounding rights.

First, we tend to assume that all rights are *justiciable*, that is, properly to be brought before a judicial or quasi-judicial body to be settled in case of a claimed violation. However, this is an erroneous assumption that is incompatible with constitutional government and a recognition of the legitimate multiplicity of legal spheres. Matilda can be said to have a genuine right to her husband Frank's love. Yet the state cannot force Frank to love his wife, because spousal love lies outside the proper competence of governmental authority.

So how would a violation of such a right be addressed? Primarily within the marital context itself. If Matilda feels that Frank is not paying enough attention to her, she does not complain to a human rights commission; she takes it up with Frank by reminding him of his responsibilities as husband. If this has no effect and if Frank stubbornly refuses to listen to and love her, there's always the possibility of divorce. Yet even in this case the state has not really forced Frank to love Matilda; it has simply recognized the dissolution of their marriage. To be sure, the state has stepped in here, but only as a last resort. Respecting and protecting spousal rights properly belongs to the spouses themselves, and perhaps to those who witnessed their vows. Government does not create these rights; it only provides a legal backup in case the marital community irreparably breaks down.



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Two kinds of freedoms

Second, the late Sir Isaiah Berlin famously distinguished between negative and positive freedoms, between "freedom from" and "freedom to." In the past most bills or charters of rights limited themselves to protecting certain negative rights, including those to freedom of speech, religion, press, association and the like. Such rights call on government simply to refrain from breaching them. No extra expenditure of funds is required. In fact, a government may actually save money by closing down an agency responsible for censoring books, periodicals and broadcasting. In so doing it is recognizing that there are certain activities lying beyond its normative competence.

When we get into the realm of positive freedoms the issue of rights becomes more complicated. In a democracy, of course, government undertakes to protect the right to vote, which is the most basic positive right. However, "freedom to", if wedded to an expansive notion of rights and their justiciability, is incompatible with a recognition of limits to government. If I claim to have a right to nourishment, does that obligate government to force the local grocer to provide me with food?

If I claim a right to have my idiosyncratic lifestyle choices affirmed by society, does this entail government forcing others to express support for me and shut down all expression of disapproval? If so, that does not fit at all well into a robust notion of constitutional government. Yet this is where much of North America appears to be going at present.

Repealing our Charter of Rights and Freedoms is not the answer. What needs to be changed is the willingness of our courts to treat mere policy aspirations as potential rights; instead they should return them to the ordinary deliberative processes crucial to representative government.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is the author of the award-winning *Political Visions and Illusions* (InterVarsity Press).

His blog can be found at: <http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/>.

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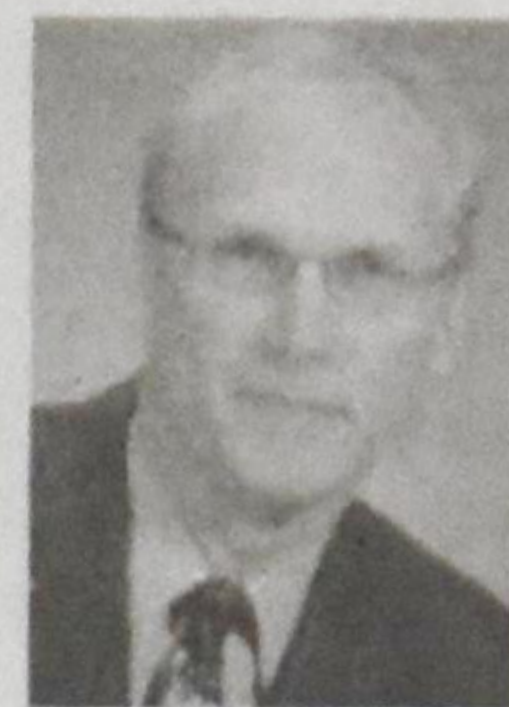
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Guest Editorial

Love in the time of softball



Kirstin Vander Giessen-Reitsma

I played softball for nine years, from the time I was seven, just old enough to join the town's C league, until I was sixteen and had to learn to make hard decisions

about my limited time. It was a hobby pleasantly incongruous with my inclinations toward writing poetry, doing calligraphy and acting. Though in junior high and high school, it almost always meant I was half insider, half outsider wherever I found myself – especially every January, when I would duck into musical rehearsals fresh from the batting cage, sweating and sore, ready to sing.

I remember one particular traveling team softball tournament in the Quad Cities right on the Mississippi River border between Iowa and Illinois. All of my teammates and their accompanying family members were staying in Jumer's Castle, a bizarre hotel in Bettendorf. Perhaps it's been renovated since then, but it felt quite like the set of the film *High Spirits*, a horror spoof played repeatedly on TNT during my formative years that takes place in Peter Plunkett's haunted Irish castle. The halls were deep scarlet, punctuated with medieval memorabilia, and in the room I shared with three other girls, thick velvet curtains cloaked window wells deep enough to sit in. One evening, escaping the hormonal pack hunting the hallways for male prey, I settled into the window well with a few books and my journal. But my perfumed roommates soon returned.

"What are you doing?"

"Reading."

Pause. Then: "Why? Are you in summer school?"

A light bulb went on, illuminating our differences, perhaps a bit too brightly. "No, I just like to read." I decided to leave the light on and see what happened.

Fourteen years later, I'm surrounded by books. I miss playing softball, but I didn't play in college and haven't pursued it since I quit the varsity team to serve as one of the editors-in-chief of my high school newspaper. The other editor? My then-boyfriend, now-husband, Rob. Certainly that was a time of discerning among many loves, loves that would change my life.

Defining love

Loving a hobby is different from loving a person,



which is different from loving God. And yet, all loves seem to share some important commonalities that teach us what it means to be human. Loving teaches us that knowing is much more than a rational process. Why do I love books? Why do I love my husband? I could make lists, elaborate on pros and cons and come to a reasonable conclusion that yes, I love Rob and books, and with sufficient justification. But that process ignores the passion and mystery of love and doesn't go far in explaining why we love even when it requires sacrifice, even when it just doesn't "make sense." Knowing in a way akin to loving requires relationship and a certain contentment with gray, with things that can't be put into words.

Loving also deepens in discipline, not in the sense of punishment, but in committed practice. Sharing a bed with my husband, participating in the eucharist, reading each night before sleeping – these practices both express and reinforce my commitments. Understanding the mysterious formative power of repetition beckons me to consider what other loves I cultivate through habit, but don't confess to out of ignorance or shame. We may be tempted to think of ourselves as undisciplined, but such thinking overemphasizes our conscious will to embody an abstract ideal and underemphasizes the way even our most unconscious repetitions shape and reinforce our identities. If my primary identity is a consumer on the treadmill of economic progress, it's ideal if I think I'm simply undisciplined while I absorb the disciplines of the status quo. However, embracing my primary identity

as a beloved child of God bears fruit in disciplines that embody my central love for God and neighbour, even when doing so doesn't make sense, or costs more than it needs to, or results in a sense of social alienation.

The risk of normal

Looking back on my softball years, I'm glad that somewhere along the way, I picked up the confidence to be okay hiding out in the window with a good book and wearing sliding shorts to drama rehearsal. It's been a transferable skill. Teenage years highlight the search for authentic love in all areas of our lives in such sharp relief, and many of us respond so dramatically that the struggle simply can't be denied.

The challenge beyond high school is to maintain an authentic search for embodied love even without the obvious microcosmic pressure of the cool kids or the race for identity. We grown-ups tend to fall into routines and begin to think of ourselves as "boring." And yet to do so as people of the Word misses out on the ongoing, wondrous process of becoming who we are in Christ and figuring out what that identity means for all areas of our lives. There are still so many important love-related decisions to be made. Sometimes, even as adults, we may risk being unpopular or misunderstood, but maybe the more immediate risk for most of us is being complacently normal, without stopping to wrestle with whether the current standard for "normal" is good in a Kingdom-of-God sort of way. Maybe the goal isn't to fit in, but to get caught in the window well. It might just present an opportunity to witness sincerely to the all-encompassing Love that calls us out of restless slumber and drives unusual behaviour. In the words I keep coming back to again and again from Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard, ever since I came across them in seventh period creative writing class:

To be a witness does not consist of engaging in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but in being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist.

Kirstin Vander Giessen-Reitsma is the editor of catapult magazine (www.catapultmagazine.com), a bi-weekly online publication of *culture is not optional. She and her husband Rob live in west Michigan, where they founded a fair trade store and work with college students. Sabbath activities include reading, biking and cooking with local produce.

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Canada



Letters

Evangelical and Reformed

I recently read Lloyd Rang's column Christ@Culture and I wholeheartedly agree with him. In 2009, we as Christians need to be engaging, even leading, our culture and definitely not shying away from it. Unfortunately, the church at large has a difficult time being in the world and not of it. We are better at hiding away in our own safe and comfortable groups which are away from the world and not in it! As a reformed Church, I wonder if it is time we went back to our evangelical roots to redefine what it means to be reformed. After all, the original intent of aligning ourselves with the word "reformed" was an action (reforming) not a past event.

Looking back to move forward

Looking back at our evangelical roots means that we also need to revisit the definition of the word "evangelical." In the past century the word evangelical has been taken out of context because of televangelists and street preachers, which can mar our understanding of what evangelical means. Over time, the original meaning of the word has been lost. In the layperson's language, we are not an evangelical church; however, historically the CRC is as evangelical as we are Protestant. To be evangelical means to emphasize the teachings and authority of the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, in opposition to the institutional authority of the church itself. This definition of our evangelical roots is a good understanding for the CRC's rich theological and intellectual history. Scripture is the Reformed frame-work for looking at and assessing everything, therefore calling us evangelical with all the original implications, is very true.

The English language seems to change with the times. When the Reformation first began the words evangelical and Reformed both referred to having a Biblical framework. Today both words are losing or have lost their original value. The culture around us is changing so quickly that the rising new generation is no longer looking at being Reformed with the same eyes. Many young people are leaving the CRC tradition for a "newer hipper" faith. The younger generation is hitting a fork in the road with only two apparent choices. One choice leads down an immovable route, refusing to

move with the changing times and therefore becoming irrelevant to our culture. The other choice is looking for a faith that has too many experiences over an intellectual foundation. Neither of these choices appeal to me.

A third choice

I believe there is a third choice. It is the choice that Lloyd Rang gave us; that is, to be a people who are Reforming. We could call it going back to our evangelical roots, or back to our Reformed roots, or even to give it a new name such as Christ@Culture. Whatever name is used, it means getting back to being Biblical Christians; Christians whose emphasis and highest authority is the Bible.

There is a trend happening with believers, young and old, who are no longer worried about the order of the service, the number of hymns or the clothes we show up in. They are looking at what the Bible has to say about relevant issues in our culture today. They are addressing God's view on all seven spheres of society instead of just religion; politics, media and entertainment, education, family, science and business. They are not only our pastors; they are the people who sit in the pews next to us who are engaging their culture in their work places. They are beginning to lead their fellow workers through applying Biblical principles in their work and in their lives. Their light is shining by who they are and not how often they attend Church meetings and programs.

I am not sure it matters whether the words evangelical and Reformed do fall out of use in the layperson's day to day vocabulary. It matters more that each member of the Body of Christ is applying the Word of God in all areas of their lives. For the writer of Hebrews said, "the Word of God is living and active." David cried out in the Psalms, "Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me." These two engaged the culture around them and continued Reforming by upholding the Word of God above tradition. I would pray that we can do the same and lead our culture, for we have the Creator God inspiring us.

Kimberley Brinkman
Bowmanville, Ontario

What do you think?

Bringing up a child in the fear of the Lord is a command that presumably goes back to Adam and Eve. We don't know what they did to carry this out. If we go by Abel, they were successful. If we go by Cain, we may have questions, though no parental guidance can guarantee success with any child. At the same time Proverbs 22:6 suggests that if you bring up a child in the fear of the Lord, they will not depart from that path, even as they get older.

Our question to you is this: "How did you or how are you nurturing your child's faith at home?" Please write one or two paragraphs in which you highlight your approach. Your answer may be very helpful to young couples who have recently started a family or hope to do so in the near future. We will publish your response in the April 13 issue.

Please send your response or any letter to the editor to angela@christiancourier.ca for the time being. Bert Witvoet will be in South Africa from February 26 till April 15.

The editors

In response to our question "Do you think Israel was justified in responding to the actions of Hamas the way it did?" we received the following responses:

Hamas's strategy – rockets or the media

Hamas has no program of improving the wellbeing of the people, or educating children to be doctors, teachers and engineers. Its platform has but one plank: war, war, endless war, sacrifice, heroism and martyrdom until Israel is wiped off the earth (Psalm 83:4). And so Hamas ends the cease-fire and rains rockets down on Israel. Israel justly fights back. Its planes bomb military targets, which have been deliberately put amid civilians. Casualties are disproportionate; Hamas has arranged it that way. They call up the media – casualty figures are announced by Hamas and accepted by reporters who are not on the spot. Everyone who is hit is, of course, a civilian. No soldiers here.

And so many months in the future the process will be repeated. In the meantime, Hamas fighters will continue to stockpile weapons in mosques and fire rockets from near schools, while Israel uses its time not only for military preparations but to educate its children, build its infrastructure and raise its living standards.

P. Aalhuizen
Burnaby, BC

Israel versus Hamas

Regarding the Middle East War, I feel sad for both sides, but you have to understand the reason for the conflict. That conflict has everything to do with history.

Ever since the Jews established settlements in Palestine, even before WWII, they were attacked by the Palestinians. The Palestinians saw them as invaders and competitors and a threat because the Israelis developed their settlements much faster and made them more modern. In 1948 the hostility increased, especially when so many Palestinians were forced to leave. No wonder they soon combined their forces to drive the Israeli to the sea. They lost the battle but not their hatred. They will never be satisfied until Israel has disappeared completely.

How do you handle such neighbors? The only way for Israel to survive is to train every man and woman for war and be armed to the teeth with a state-of-the-art military. With the threat of extinction hanging over their head the Israeli have to intimidate the enemy and show their superior power. In that light we have to see the reason for Israel's over-reaction. Besides that, Israel never started a war against Hezbollah or Hamas.

Nevertheless, to the Palestinians, Israel remains the invader. There is no way out of this mess. Beside that, the Palestinians and Arabs have been fighting among themselves for centuries, tribe against tribe, even tribes within themselves. Peaceful co-existence is not even in their vocabulary. Both the Israeli and the Palestinians have created a situation where there is no way out. But that is nothing new: it happens when you reject Christ as your guide, your Lord and your Savior.

Jim Aukema
Chatham, Ontario

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News

For the Healing of the Nations

Michael Wagenman

In 2 Kings 5 we find the story of Naaman, the Syrian army commander, and his healing through Israel's prophet Elisha. In it we rediscover God's call to his people: to be a healing blessing to the nations of the world. Calvin College's Faith and International Development conference (FIDC), held in the first week of February, seeks something similar: to equip students to be advocates and agents of social justice throughout God's world.

This conference began in 2006 as an endeavor "of, by, and for students," and it has drawn hundreds of North American college and university students together each year. Central to the conference is an intentional integration of faith with the world of social justice and international development. According to Carissa DeYoung,

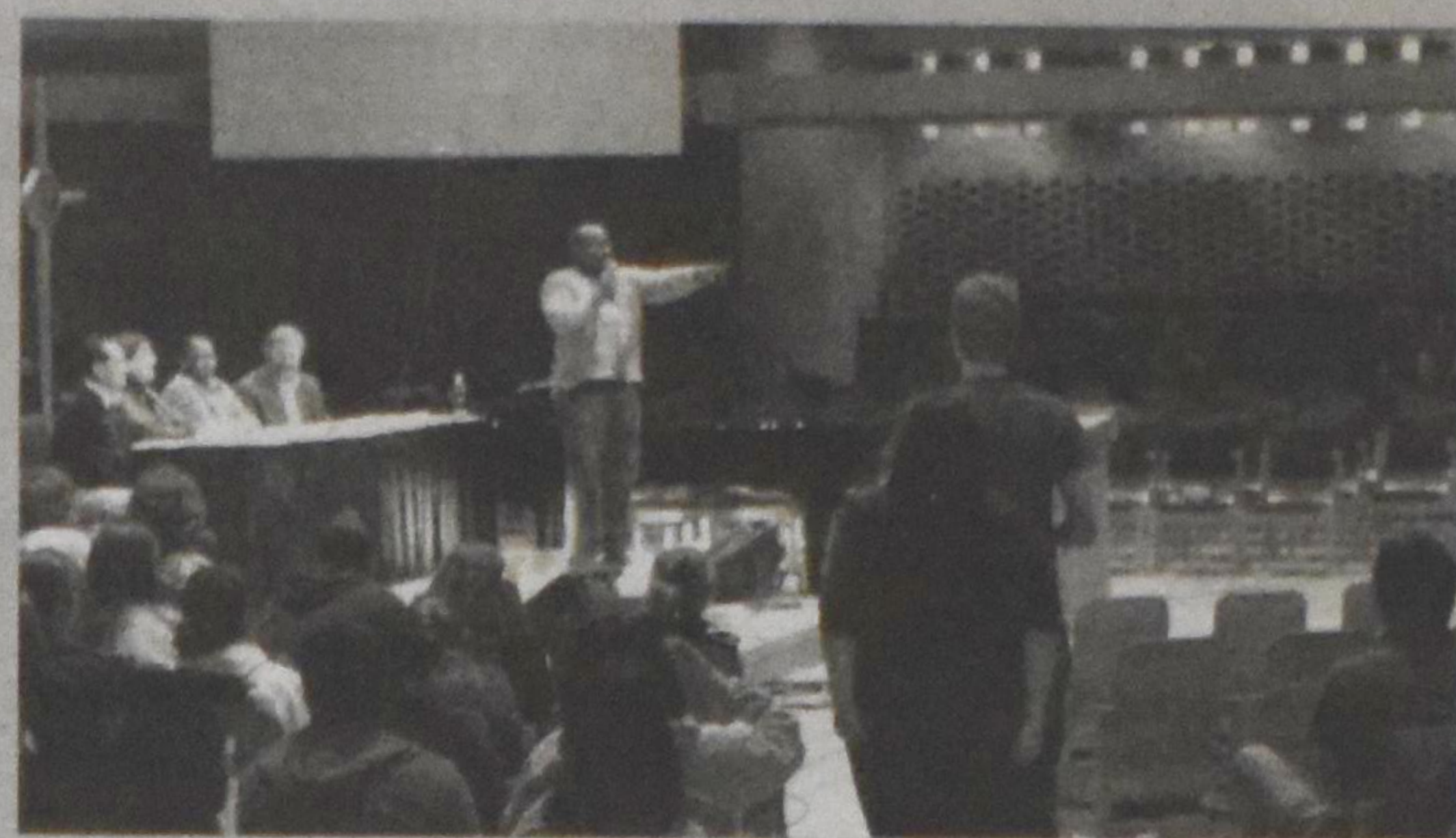
Co-Director of the conference and 3rd year Calvin College student, "International development cannot be successful if it disregards the role of faith in the lives of all. By relating these terms, we realize that faith is an integral part of who we are and what we do in the world."

The specific focus this year was on partnership, growing out of last year's focus on sustainability. Thinking about the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as an example, one way to achieve sustainability in reducing poverty or increasing education is to enter into partnerships with local agencies for long-term, lasting impact. From keynote speakers with experience working with World Vision or the World Bank to breakout sessions led by representatives from Bread for the World, CRWRC, Mennonite Central Committee, and

How did the students respond?

Leah is the President of the STAND student club on campus (Students Taking Action Now for Darfur). It's one of the largest student clubs on campus and the most involved club when it comes to issues of social justice advocacy. She's a major "mover and shaker" on campus. I got to know her when she expressed to me that she feels all alone on campus: the Christian clubs don't understand her passion for social justice and the social justice people don't understand her Christian faith. She feels caught in the middle and has very few places to go for support and encouragement.

Leah and one of her fellow STAND members came along to Calvin's FIDC. They both felt that many of their questions were answered by this conference (while many were left unanswered, too, like how "faith" and "international development" can be integrated without falling into colonialism or imperialism all over again). They were encouraged to be with so many other practitioners and professions who were open to their



A panel discussion with the four plenary speakers concluded the Faith and International Development Conference

questions and struggles and were willing to listen and dialogue.

Leah was very inspired and has returned to campus to start some conversations with the other four students who came along about how the efforts of Christians in social justice advocacy groups could possibly coordinate their efforts to bring a Christian voice to the conversation. I felt that their attendance at FIDC was a key way in which I was able to disciple them as Christians who want to extend the blessing and reign of Christ on campus and around the world.

the ONE Campaign to a hands-on scale through World Vision's simulation of poverty on a global "Broken Bread meal," a varied

range of activities and examples were offered to inspire students to think about how to foster balanced relationships of power through mutual respect and sensitivity.

DeYoung echoes many students' complex feelings when she says that "looking around the chapel at several points and seeing all the faces of those who chose to come to the conference, sometimes the problems of poverty and injustice seem so large and the progress so small that it can be discouraging. However, when we see that so many people care and are working alongside us in development we are challenged to keep up the work and to know that there is hope for the future." And our hope for the future is all the more sure when it is rooted in the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ at work in our world — whether that's through Christian students on international service projects or non-religious NGOs blessed by God's common grace.

Calvin's FIDC is primarily geared for students, but anyone interested in exploring international development through the lens of faith will find these days well-spent. It is a unique opportunity to gather with others who are seeking to be a healing blessing to the nations. It is also a rare thing to find a conference that boldly speaks of faith and international development after many critics have attempted to sideline the contribution of Christians after the colonial or imperial errors of past generations. And the wealth of information, the breadth of guest professionals, and the price-consciousness of the planning all contribute to a "rich" experience in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Continued on page 7

Social networking and the private sphere

Although I consider myself a "digital native" as opposed to a "digital immigrant," I don't share the impulse to post vast amounts of personal information and pictures on social networking websites. Social networking sites bring together millions of people who share common interests and friendships and include sites such as FaceBook.com, MySpace.com and Classmates.com. These sites have undergone remarkable growth in recent years. Facebook started as an online student directory at Harvard and now boasts over 175 million users worldwide. Even the *Christian Courier* has its very own Facebook page.

Another service called "Twitter" allows you to stay "hyper-connected" to your friends so you always know what they are doing. Twitter allows one to post frequent updates by sending short 140-character-or-fewer "tweets" via text messaging. These posts can alert colleagues that you are running late for a meeting, share what you are currently eating, or announce that you are going out for a cup of coffee. In addition to posting status messages, Google's new "Latitude" service provides further details by allowing one to track a person's whereabouts using a combination of GPS, cell tower location databases, and WiFi connection locations.

Too much info?

There are many critics who voice concerns over these recent developments with regards to the use and ownership of private information. For one thing, some people show poor judgment and post racy profiles of themselves or others. Another concern is how information is used to profile and target users for advertising. Social networking sites are a marketer's dream: millions of people willingly submitting vast amounts of personal information, and marketers don't even have to type the data in — users are doing it for them. Users often reveal their birthday, relationship status, favourite books, and much more.

Besides personal profiles, links to "friends" provide substantial information about who you are: if you like model trains, your friends are statistically more likely to like model trains as well. In his book *The Numerati*, Stephen Baker describes how mathematicians are being employed to harness sophisticated statistical pattern recognition and data mining algorithms on vast amounts of personal data for targeting ads and for a variety of other purposes. For this reason, some social networking sites have been evaluated to be worth billions of dollars.



Technically Speaking

Derek Schuurman

Targeted ads

The resulting ads can be finely targeted to our "soft spots." A writer for the *Washington Post* wrote an article in September 2008 about her experience with a popular social networking site and how her online information was used to "target you where it hurts." She describes distasteful dieting ads that changed with the knowledge that she was about to be married into ads that read "Do you want to be a fat bride?" with links to sites on how to lose weight before the big day. After changing her status from "engaged" to "married" she started to see new ads for male and female infertility treatments.

Similar technology is also employed by free web-based email services, which generate ad revenue based on what users type in the body of an e-mail. These techniques are not only employed by marketers, but are also being applied by employers, political parties, on-line dating sites, and also by law enforcement agencies.

Use discretion

Many people don't mind the notion of sacrificing personal information to stay in touch with friends and family, but should Christians be concerned about personal information and privacy, even if they live just and upright lives? To what extent are our hearts vulnerable to targeted advertising? How do social networking sites affect people and their relationships? Thoughtful Christians ought to be asking these sorts of questions. It is also important to have a sense of what should remain in our "personal sphere", and what is appropriate information to share publicly online.

Online communication is helpful, but we should recognize that it is a poor substitute for face-to-face communities. Users should be wise to the commercialized agendas of many online communities and be discerning about the information that they post. Colossians 4:5-6 has some good instruction for personal interactions: "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Those who participate in social networks should also be wise, and season their posts, "tweets", and JPEGs with salt as well.

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News

Up early to inspire the sons and daughters of Zebedee

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. – I had to get up at 6 a.m. on February 19 to attend a 7 a.m. breakfast meeting of the Niagara Chapter of the Canadian Christian Business Federation (CCBF). Hans VanderStoep, its executive director, leads eight breakfasts a month throughout Southern Ontario – in Smithville, Burlington, Woodstock, Ancaster, Waterloo, Brantford, London and Niagara.

CCBF has been in existence since 1984, and it's acknowledging 25 years of service without planning any special celebration. Hans Vander Stoep has been its director for 22 of those years.

What does CCBF do? According to the CCBF website (www.ccbf.org) its purpose is to:

- Meet monthly to apply biblical principles to real business issues.
- Address issues of local, provincial or federal concern, through the presentation of briefs and submissions as chapters and through membership in the Canadian Christian Business Federation.
- Address local business needs.
- Organize public meetings for the local Christian business community.

What is leadership?

At the Niagara meeting about five members read and discussed a paper entitled "Leadership as Taught in the Bible." This paper is part of a series about leadership that Vander Stoep uses to inspire Christian professionals and business people. Many of the participants are leaders in their field and use these opportunities to be reminded of what God's Word has to say about their task.

The discussion this morning centred around the request of the wife of Zebedee that her two sons, disciples of Jesus, might sit at the right and left hand of Jesus when he climbs the throne of his kingdom. Little did she know that a bunch of business people would talk about her two darling boys, the sons of Zebedee, in the year 2009 in a restaurant next to the Queen Elizabeth Way. But the discussion was really about what it means to want to be the greatest and the first. Christian leaders are always faced with that dilemma. Jesus' answer is that if you want to be great, you need to be a servant; conversely, if you want to be first, you need to stand at the back of the line. The questions included: How does one wield power with that kind of restriction? What is more important – power or influence?

A service organization

When CCBF started years ago, it used to focus on speaking out against Sunday shopping (a dead issue in Canada today), and even against abortion (not a business issue as such). At that time, too, the organization had an unwieldy acronym

Healing... continued from page 6

My own personal hopes and dreams were also stirred as I sat with six students from the University of Western Ontario. What if, like ancient Elisha, students today recovered God's vision of a world healed, blessed, and redeemed? What if all who call on the Lord Jesus Christ entered into partnership with this God who is calling to us to extend the blessing we've received to others?

Rev. Michael R. Wagenman is a husband, father, and director of the Christian Reformed campus ministries at the University of Western Ontario in London. He plans to attend Calvin's FIDC next year as well.



CCBF: (from l. to r.) Peter Heida, former owner of Rainbow Marketing; Hans Vander Stoep, executive director of CCBF; John Van Wely, general manager of AIM Transportation Services; and John Van Egmond, principal engineer at AeonEgmond Ltd

– the RCBPA of Canada – which, according to Vander Stoep, reminded him of PRAVDA. Today the acronym is slightly more manageable, and the emphasis is on networking as

CCBF offers a placement service for employers looking for workers, and workers looking for employment opportunities. It also publishes an annual business directory, which lists more than 800 Christian business and professional people. The website offers a variety of links to Christian organizations and publications.

Vander Stoep, who rises early every day and, consequently, seldom eats breakfast with his spouse, is on the road a lot as he rubs elbows with members and leaders of other Christian organizations. At age 70 he is keeping his eyes peeled for a possible successor.

Everybody is welcome to attend a breakfast meeting ("on your own dime"), says Vander Stoep. The CCBF website offers a "calendar" button that tells people when and where the next meeting will be held. If you are up early enough to attend, and if you happen to be the first to arrive, think of Zebedee's wife and order coffee for everyone else.

Cows have some awfully bad habits

Dairy cows are messy eaters. They toss the feed they have in front of them and throw it out of reach, just like little children do. It's called feed-tossing behavior. They throw it away with their nose.

If you've been in a Pennsylvania bank barn, or the other types of large barns that were constructed throughout Ontario in the early part of the last century, you'll see that carpenters in those days build an enclosed feed manger. The mangers were about three feet wide and had a front that was about three feet in height. They were built out of lumber or cement.

The enclosed mangers were good for feeding grain and silage as it prevented the cows from tossing feed to where they couldn't reach it. It wasn't a cure when feeding hay, though, because cows can easily whip the hay over the side – especially flakes of baled hay.

The enclosed mangers had disadvantages. Farmers couldn't just dump a wheelbarrow full of silage into the manger. It had to be forked in. And the enclosed mangers were harder to clean out.

Pros and cons

As I recall, mangers were left open in most barns constructed after the 1950s when corn silage became popular with dairy farmers. Silage was easy to dump in front of the animals, and it was a simple task to remove any leftovers. But the one disadvantage was that mangers had to be swept with a broom during the day when the cows were eating.

When cows toss feed away they must reach ahead to get it with their tongue. That wears the bolts in a stanchion tie system – they wear thin and eventually break off. I replaced many, many bolts and stanchions during the years we milked in a stanchion tie barn.

Some cows also throw feed along their side and over their back while eating.

Last round

I always spent 5-10 minutes in the dairy barn before retiring for the night – something my father always did as well. I'd sweep in the last bit of remaining feed and check the cows for signs of heat (for breeding A.I.). If a cow was restless, that meant something. I considered these last minutes of a day quality time spent with the cows. It meant going out to the barn at around 9 or 10 p.m. Most of the cows would be lying down, as content as sleeping children. Water was always shut off at night in case there was a broken water

bowl during the night. That way no flood waters greeted me in the morning.

During the winter months cows were let out in the barnyard for an hour or two when the weather wasn't too cold. It was good exercise for cows tied up the rest of the time. When they couldn't go out it meant we had to brush the cows with a stiff brush. Cows loved being brushed but it was a dirty job. It brought up airborne dust and hair. It wouldn't have been so bad had there been just a few cows to do, but keeping many cows neat and clean all winter was not my favourite job. My parents had a saying in Dutch that went something like "brushing and polishing cows is as important as feeding them."

Brushing and polishing dairy cows isn't done so much any more. Most large dairy herds are housed in large free-stall barns and are never brushed.

Robot feed pusher

Feed tossing is also a problem in the free-stall barns. Some farmers have a little tractor with an angled front blade, and they drive up and down the feed alley pushing the feed back in.

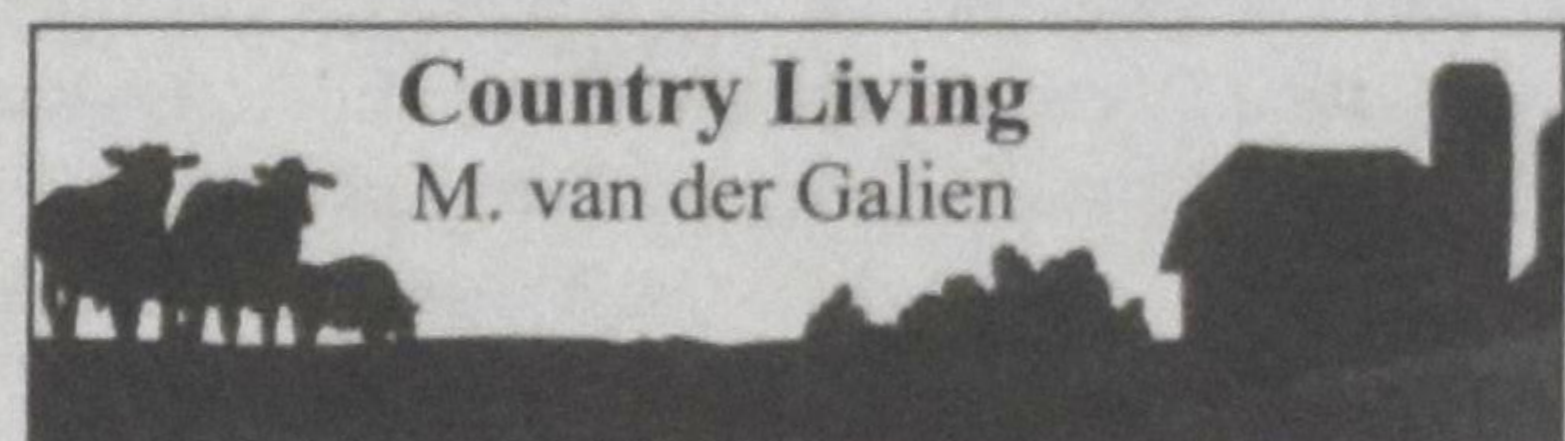
A robot feed pusher is now available in Canada. It weighs 575 kilograms – 500kg of that is a cement block for weight. Lely, the Dutch company that developed the Lely Astronaut robotic milking system, developed the spaceship-shaped Juno. Lely says Juno can be programmed to regularly move up and down the feeding passage, throughout the day or night, pushing silage up to the feeding cows. When power runs low, Juno simply returns automatically to a recharging point and links up there until its 12-volt batteries are fully charged.

I called the Lely office to find out the cost of this new invention, since no information had been given out on the price. The all-inclusive package comes to \$25,500.

The 500 kg cement block gives the machine enough weight to push up to 75 centimetre-high piles of silage closer to the feeding cows.

Lely says the feed pusher saves time and gives farmers the flexibility and freedom to devote their energy to other tasks. Other tasks? Maybe it's for the dairy farmer who prefers to spend quality time with his family rather than with his cows.

Maynard van der Galien retired from dairy farming 10 years ago. He keeps beef cattle and rents out cropland at his farm near Renfrew, Ont.



Church

Church leaders: Christians can help rebuild Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq (Christian Post) – Iraqi church leaders at a meeting in Lebanon last month said Iraqi Christians should not be encouraged to migrate. They would do best to remain in their homeland with an aim toward rebuilding it.

"The solution to current conditions lies not in emptying Iraq of its human resources," said the church leaders.

The meeting was organized by the World Council of Churches. The representatives called on Christians in Iraq "to stay in their homeland and participate actively in its rebuilding and development" despite severe persecution in recent years that has included kidnappings, death threats, and murders.

The Christian population in Iraq is now about half of what it was before the current war began in 2003.

Indian Hindus threaten Catholic schools over 'anti-national acts'

ROME (CNA) – Catholics in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh have expressed their grave concern over threats made against their Christian schools by the Hindu fundamentalist group Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarti Parishad (Abvp).

According to *L'Osservatore Romano* (LOR), the Hindu group is "the youth branch of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the extremist party that holds a majority in the current government." LOR reports that one of the party's representatives said, "The schools that engage in anti-national acts will be identified and denounced to the police and the government."

The group accuses Christian schools of not allowing students to sing the national song or the national anthem. Father Cajetan D'Mello, president of the Indore Catholic Schools Association, said the charges are baseless as the "national hymn or song is sung with the children on a regular basis" in Christian schools.

The national song, which is different from the national anthem, was composed in remembrance of the independence from Great Britain and contains implicit references to the religion and culture of Hindus. Father D'Mello noted that Christian schools do "defend the national traditions of India," but obviously do not teach Hinduism.

Vatican admits Bible not just for 'experts'

ROME (CNA) – A Vatican official said late last month that the reading of the Bible should avoid three major pitfalls: "subjectivism, arbitrariness or fundamentalism."

Archbishop Nikola Eterovic, secretary general of the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops, made that assertion while he presented a book about Bible reading written by another bishop. That book, *The Word in Words: From Biblicism to the Realism of the Faith*, by Bishop Lorenzo Leuzzi, is in turn based on reflections made by Pope Benedict during the Synod on the Word of God which was held at the Vatican.

Archbishop Eterovic asserted that "the faithful's personal encounter with the Word of God takes place in the sphere of the ecclesial community" (in other words, interpretation should take place within the body of the church). Eterovic also noted Pope Benedict's assertion that there is a "need for a Catholic exegesis that takes into account the human and divine dimension of the revealed Word."

The Pope's reflections guided the work of the synod members "who were looking for a just position on this issue, taking in all the good that comes from modern exegesis but inserting it into the Tradition of the Church."

Bible reading by individual Catholics was not encouraged throughout much of the history of the Roman church. That has changed in the last several decades. Eterovic calls Bible reading "this essential issue for the life and mission of the Church" which "has not only to do with experts, exegetes and theologians, but also with all Christians who should have a proper knowledge of the Word of God."

Debut of New Testament in modern Chinese

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – A Bible publisher's answered prayer is about to become a dream come true for potentially millions of Chinese Christians: a modern translation of the New Testament in their own language.

Holman Bible Publishers has received a printing of 20,000 Chinese Standard Bible New Testaments, described as the first direct Chinese translation by scholars from the original Greek. Copies are now being sold in the United States, Canada and Brazil. Holman Bible Publishers is affiliated with LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Our goal is that Chinese Christians would read this translation and love it," said Phill Burgess, executive director. "The translation that Chinese Christians have been using up to now, the Chinese Union Version, was translated into Chinese from an English copy in the 1920s. The language in that translation is archaic. This one is easier to understand since it relates to the modern Chinese language."

In 2004, the Asia Bible Society approached LifeWay seeking a New Testament translated from the original Greek,

and LifeWay signed on for the project.

"This request was an answer to prayer," Burgess said. "Having the opportunity to get the New Testament into the hands of Chinese-speaking people is a precious honor for us."

Publishing the Bibles in China (translating, editing and design) would be a difficult, time-consuming and expensive process, said Tim Jordan, an executive editor. "In the future, LifeWay hopes to get legal approval from the Chinese government to publish Bibles in China," Jordan said. "Until then our primary focus will stay in the U.S., Canada and Brazil." The Bibles, however, are printed in Shenzhen, China, and transported back to LifeWay's distribution center in Lebanon, Tenn.

Having a current readable Bible in modern Chinese is important, if based on nothing but the numbers. Worldwide, an estimated 1.17 billion people are native speakers of Chinese. While spoken Chinese varies from region to region, the written language is common to most readers.

"This new translation is an investment," Jordan said. "We'll watch and see what the demand for the new Bible is."

Goddess worshipper finds Prince of Peace

ANDHRA PRADESH, India (GFA) – Thinking her religion had given her what she most longed for, Lali ardently worshiped a goddess after a string of "good luck." But Lali would soon find that the goddess brought her anything but peace.

Lali had a difficult life from an early age. Her mother passed away when she was a child, leaving her to be raised by her stepmother. But her stepmother wasn't really interested in her and in reality Lali grew up much like an orphan.

She married very young to a man who owned a delivery truck and tractors and made a good living. Briefly, Lali thought she was "getting a good break in life." But she began to face rejection again, this time from her in-laws. Lali was unable to bear children, a situation that causes shame and brings scorn on a woman in India's culture. When Lali's in-laws took her to see a witch doctor for her barrenness she did become pregnant, and later bore more children. Lali felt her dreams were answered.

Lali began to engage heavily in idol worship and started mimicking the goddess Ellamma. The people in her village recognized that she had become possessed by an evil spirit – still a common occurrence in India and Africa. To try to counteract the spirit, the villagers began worshipping Lali herself as the human representative of Ellamma.

The family became agitated and fearful. They suddenly lost their trucks and tractors, then even their land. They became ill. Every day, someone in the family was sick. Lali herself suffered from severe stomach pain. Finally, they concluded that the witch

doctor had done something against their family, and it was revealed that the witch doctor also had an illicit relationship with Lali's husband.



Lali says that's when hope reached them. It came through a Christian in a local church led by Tanvir, a missionary with Gospel for Asia which trains and sends out indigenous missionaries in many countries.

Tanvir visited Lali's family and listened to her story. Tanvir told her the Good News of Jesus Christ and invited her to church. When Lali did come to church one day, Tanvir was there and taught her more about Jesus. Lali began to believe in Jesus and attend the church regularly. She started praying to Jesus and found the peace that only he can give.

Three months later Lali had been healed of her stomach pain. She was also encouraged by changes she saw in the family, and she found her trust in Jesus strengthened. Lali even opened her home for a prayer meeting, but her husband objected. Thankfully, he did allow her to keep attending church since he recognized that Jesus had healed her – and he even instructed all the relatives not to say anything against his wife's new faith.

Today Lali is an active Christian believer, worshipping with others at the church led by Tanvir. They are praying that she will continue to grow in her faith and that her husband and family will also be changed.

Mainline U.S. Presbyterians lose more congregations

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. (Christian Post) – In a move not unlike recent and ongoing actions by fellow Christians in the Anglican Communion, three congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have left that denomination for a smaller, more conservative church. The three congregations in Indiana (in West Lafayette, Frankfort and Nappanee) asked for and were finally granted "dismissal" from the PC (USA) to join the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The vote was 115 to 2.

Covenant Church in West Lafayette has over 1000 members and had been trying to leave the PC. However, its presbytery (equivalent to a Christian Reformed classis) had taken over governance of the congregation to prevent a split from the denomination. Similar events took place for the other two churches.

"There was disagreement over what it meant to be faithful to Jesus' teaching in certain areas of ethics, such as in the area of sexuality," explains David Henderson, pastor of Covenant. The disagreement at heart was over how seriously one takes the Bible, and over the PC (USA)'s acceptance of a wider range of theological positions than Covenant and the other two

congregations can live with. But Henderson stressed, "We were determined to let love have the last word, not disagreement or frustration or hurt. And I think it has."

Leaving had a financial as well as emotion cost. The dismissal agreement with the Presbytery of Wabash Valley includes a payment of \$975,000 by the three churches and a transfer of ownership by the presbytery of each church's property.

In recent years, a growing number of congregations have voted to leave the PC(USA) – the largest Presbyterian denomination in the U.S. – and join the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Some date the beginning of the exodus to 2001 when the General Assembly would not affirm the singular saving Lordship of Jesus Christ. Also, a 2006 decision by the General Assembly that some believe allowed leeway for the ordination of partnered homosexuals led to more splits.

This year, the denomination's 173 presbyteries are voting on a proposal to delete language in the constitution that requires clergy to live in "fidelity within the covenant of marriage

Continued on page 9

School

New Bible curriculum connects head, heart, hands

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – Christian Schools International (CSI) has developed a new elementary school Bible curriculum that it hopes will help students “connect their head, heart and hands” as they live in relationship with God.

“As Christ followers, we believe that it is only by the study of the Word of God that we understand who we are and our connection to the story of God reaching out to his people over the centuries,” says CSI. “We want our students to choose the story of God and learn how to find their place in that story.”

CSI believes that its new curriculum for grades P-4 and 5-8, called “Walking With God and His People,” will help students do that. The intent of the curriculum is to help students understand “who they are in relationship to God, to make authentic connections between the stories of God’s people and their own lives, and to understand what responding to God means.” That’s where the connecting of head, heart and hands comes in.



CSI cites this reminder by Craig R. Dykstra, writer on Christian education and the Lilly Endowment’s vice-president for religion. “Faith understood as a way of life always seems to involve the fashioning of distinctive emotions; of distinctive habits, practices, and virtues; of distinctive purposes, desires, passions, and commitments; and of distinctive beliefs and ways of thinking.”

That means, says CSI, “the faith we seek to encourage in students involves understanding/wisdom (head), conviction/choosing (heart), and living/serving (hands). Knowledge is dependant on motivation/conviction to be effective.”

CSI concludes, “We pray that this curriculum may serve as significant tinder for the Spirit of God to light ablaze in the lives of students – equipping them to impact the world for Jesus Christ.”

Christian Schools International was founded in 1920 as the National Union of Christian Schools, the first educational organization to serve Christian schools in North America. It is the umbrella organization for the Reformed Christian schools originally founded by members of the Christian Reformed Church.

Advance ordering of the new CSI Bible curriculum began last month. In May, orders for the P-4 curriculum will begin shipping. Orders for the grade 5-8 curriculum will be taken starting in the spring of 2010.

Sudanese Christian school rises from civil-war ashes

LOKA, South Sudan (CWNNews.com) – In South Sudan, the rebuilding process is underway after a long and bloody war. One of the top priorities in the minds of South Sudanese is educating the next generation. Western ministries like the Voice of the Martyrs Canada are lending them a hand.

A Christian school with a long history is rising from the ashes of the civil war to build future leaders for South Sudan. In 2001, Islamic government soldiers left the Nugent Christian Secondary School in ruins before fleeing the area. It further deteriorated and was covered in grass and weeds until recently.

The school and campus in Loka, founded by British missionaries in 1929, was at one time home to 2,500 students. It educated future pastors, bishops, government leaders and intellectuals.

Loka is in South Sudan, in the Eastern Equatorial province. The South Sudanese suffered under the ravages of civil war for 20 years as they resisted the ethnic and religious genocide by the Khartoum government in the north which claimed over two million lives. The majority of those killed were Southern Christians. Many Churches and Christian relief agencies were specifically targeted for attack. The Khartoum government troops destroyed buildings, including the historic and highly regarded Nugent School in Loka. A peace treaty was finally signed in January 2005.

Christian education their greatest need

Tom Zurowski, director of the U.S.-based Global Response Network, has worked in Sudan for many years. He says, “When I first came to South Sudan we would go from village to village and ask people, ‘What is your greatest need?’ And they told us, ‘The greatest need that we have is education. And not just education, but Christian education.’” That still holds true.

The local people did the majority of the work in rebuilding the Nugent School and they’ve taken ownership of it, says Zurowski. “We want what the people want. We want to take this as far as the people want to take it. It’s not our project; this is the project of the people.”

Dickson Mutiso is the field director for the rejuvenated Nugent School. He is from Kenya and spends considerable time away from his family to co-ordinate the day to day operation of the school.

Mutiso has given up much because of his desire to see the students trained for godly purposes. He says, “We want to see, one day, in the future, some great women and men of God coming out of the Nugent Secondary School, who are going out there to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ; to be very good and inspired leaders of this nation in future generations.”

One student, 18-year-old Joseph Yugu, has a scarred face – a reminder of a tragic event he went through as a baby. He was thrown into a fire by Muslim neighbors. He suffered serious burns on the right side of his face and was blinded in his right eye. That dreadful event was not the end of his suffering, however; his parents were murdered.

Yugu credits the Lord Jesus for getting him through. He is especially grateful for the opportunity to go to school and eventually wants to be a journalist. He says, “I like school because when I’m finished [with] my school I will get a job. I will help the people.”

Perida Jokudu is now 20, and walks over 20 kilometers each day to attend Nugent School. She is excited for the chance to get an education and to be a part of helping South Sudan rebuild. “By coming to school always, it will help me to become a good leader,” she says.



Court: Christian school may expel girls in lesbian relationship

Marian Van Til

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – A Christian high school has the right to expel students who are involved in a lesbian relationship, a California appeals court ruled on January 28.

The girls were identified in court papers only as Jane Doe and Jane Roe. They brought suit against their Lutheran school and its principal, Rev. Gregory R. Bork, after they were expelled because of their relationship, which violated the school’s Christian conduct code.

The Fourth District Court of Appeals upheld the right of California Lutheran High School in Wildomar, California, to exclude students on the basis of sexual orientation because the school is a “private religious organization.”

The appellate court ruled that the school is not a “business enterprise” and is therefore not subject to the state’s Unruh Civil Rights Act. That law bans discrimination by businesses but not by private social or religious organizations. Anti-discrimination laws do apply to public schools.

The court based its ruling partly on a 1998 California Supreme Court ruling that the Boy Scouts of America is a social organization that has the right to exclude gays and atheists. The judge wrote, “The whole purpose of sending one’s child to a religious school is to ensure that he or she learns even secular subjects within a religious framework.”

The court also rejected the plaintiffs’ right to privacy, false imprisonment and unfair business practices claims.

Kirk Hudson, lawyer for the two girls, said he would appeal the ruling to the state Supreme Court. He did not accept the judge’s argument and insisted that the ruling gives specifically faith-based schools “carte blanche to discriminate on any basis.”

At 28, Sadraka Joseph is one of the older students. His goal is to become a full-time preacher of the Gospel. He says that his father, a revival leader, appeared to him in a dream indicating that Sadraka should become a preacher like him.

Trained teachers scarce

There has been much to celebrate with the fast growth of the Nugent Secondary School. Topping the list of challenges, however, is getting good, trained teachers into the school.

Tom Zurowski says, “People who have achieved any kind of academic, higher academic levels have actually left the country. They have gone to places like Britain or Canada or the United States to further their education. But then, what happens is, many of them stay there. So we find ourselves with a very small pool of qualified people who can actually teach these students.”

Nugent field director Mutiso says, “This is the right time for them to come back home and try to help these children, who are very needy, and who have been neglected for a long time during the war.”

Not only has the main school been repaired and some of the buildings that house the teachers in the main school, but the chapel is in the process of being restored.

It is especially in chapel where the students are challenged by teachers and fellow students to learn more about their relationship with Jesus, to live godly lives, and to take up the challenge to be the future Christian leaders in South Sudan.

The rebirth of the Nugent School is much more than just fixed-up buildings, say those involved. It represents a new beginning in South Sudan. They pray “that the school is filled with peace and faith in Jesus.” Their prayers are clearly being answered.

Continued from page 8

between and a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness.” Approval by a majority of the presbyteries would allow for the ordination of non-celibate gays and lesbians.

The three Indiana congregations will officially leave the PC(USA) on April 15, according to a local paper, and around the same time a joint closing worship service with the Wabash Valley Presbytery will be held.

Memoirs / Resolve

STORIES OF OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE (Part IV)

As experienced by Machiel Edelman (codename Dolf) and narrated by his daughter Dineke Poelman.

Edith's deception

Edith, the gal from Soest, came from an upstanding Reformed family and became a courier for the Council of the Resistance. Edith was a pretty girl, slender, dark, and strikingly made up. In January 1944 she had to deliver illegal newspapers and a German uniform somewhere in the woods of Lage Vuursche. The Germans showed up, and she was arrested.

For months she was in prison, but one day she reported back to the Resistance. She told them she had escaped. That was a lie. In reality she had fallen in love with one of the officers of the SD, and in exchange for her freedom she had promised him to help track down the resistance.

The Resistance did not suspect her. She worked very hard and took on the most dangerous jobs, travelling regularly with some 1500 food stamps under her clothing, pretending to be pregnant. Soon they could not do without Edith. She knew all the people and a lot of contact addresses.

New task

One Saturday she was introduced to Dolf, who was at that time hiding out in Bussum. After he was rescued from the hospital his

description was known to the Germans. In fact, he was on their list of wanted criminals. Unable therefore to travel, he was now in charge of the distribution of illegal food stamps for three provinces and for the countrywide distribution of the mail. For this job he had available to him two male and three female couriers. Edith was one of them.

She was very interested. "Are you Dolf? I've heard so many things about you. How are you? You were wounded recently, right?"

One day Dolf told Edith he had a dangerous job for her to do. She had to bring a suitcase of forbidden items to Arnhem. He himself would pick up the suitcase and bring it to the train station. She had to wait for him there.

Dolf biked to the address where he had to pick up the suitcase, but it was a fruitless trip – the people were not at home – and he continued on to the train station to let Edith know. It was July 29, weather-wise, a fantastic day.

"It's a no-go, Edith. Take the day off, you can go swimming."

"No, I'd rather work. Don't you have anything else for me to do?"

"Yes... I have a letter that has to be delivered. But I don't have it with me. It's at my place. We'll have to go there first."

"Great, we'll do that," said Edith, and jumped on the back of Dolf's bike.

Quick decision

On the way Dolf worried himself sick. Could he take Edith to his "underground" address? Better that no one knew where he was staying. But she could be trusted, couldn't she? Surely it would be all right.

Close to his house, he met a friend from the resistance. Ah, there was the solution! "Oh, Piet," Dolf said, "Will you stay at the bench here with Edith while I bike home to pick something up?"

Later he would thank the Lord on his knees for this split-second decision.

Two days later, July 31, 1944, it was still very warm and a number of young people, all members of the resistance, decided to go sailing for the day on the Loosdrechtse Plassen (a small lake). Dolf went along as well. That evening he was to attend a meeting with the leaders of the Resistance at the Peerlekamp in Hilversum. Many of the important provincial leaders would be there.

It was already quite late when they returned, so Dolf hurriedly biked ahead of the others to his meeting place. Just as he started to open the gate of the house on Peerlekamp, a boy of about 16 ran up to him and said, "Don't go inside, sir, the SD is inside!"

Reacting instantly, Dolf turned his bike around and raced away. He waited for the boy on the corner. The boy told him that he had seen many people being dragged inside the house.

"But you are dangerously close to the house, yourself", Dolf said. "You should go a little farther away in order to warn everyone."

Dolf watched the boy as he returned and saw, as he walked past the house, that he, too, was dragged inside by the SD. The boy was held for a couple of days and then, fortunately, released.

What to do? Who had been arrested already? Quickly Dolf rode to a safe house to consult with others. Together with a friend he went to the train station where they were able to warn a few people.

The next days were disastrous. Throughout the entire country people were arrested and addresses disclosed. At first the Resistance had no idea who had betrayed them. But it was soon apparent that all the addresses in question were places where Edith had been. Approximately 60 people were the victims of her betrayal. All were sent to concentration camps. Many did not return.

Dolf was fully aware of how the Lord had again wonderfully saved him.

As for Edith, nothing was ever heard of her again, although after the war there were many who searched.

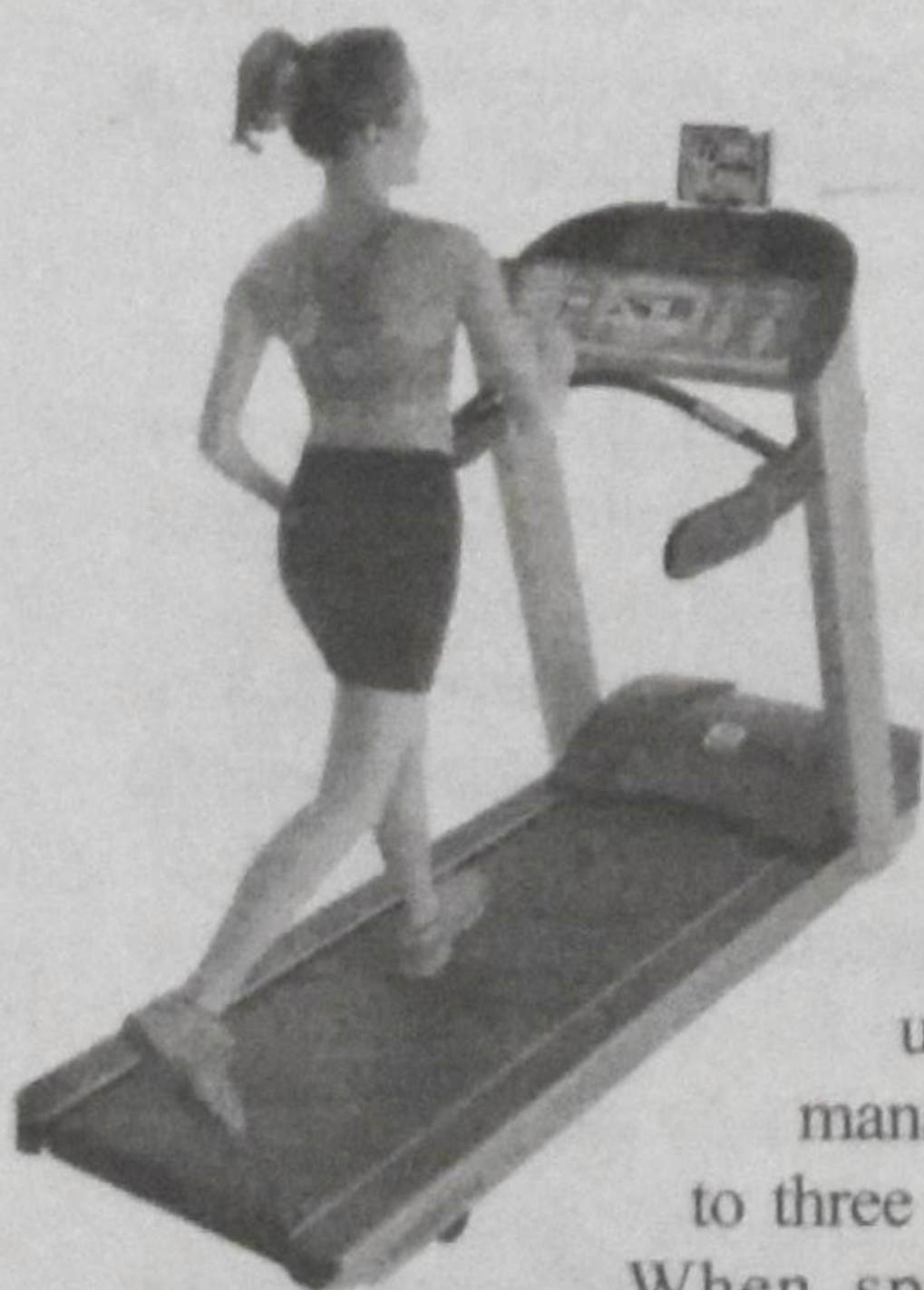
Part V next issue



Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

The long run



Why do good habits take a long time to establish and only a little while to set aside? Last winter I bought a used treadmill and vowed to spend 40 minutes on it daily. I managed to work up to three miles each day.

When spring arrived I switched to riding my bicycle down the side road we live on. My summer routine includes a lot more time outside and physical work, so the treadmill rested until the days again grew shorter and colder.

From October until Christmas I did fairly well. Then came the irregular schedule of the holiday season, followed by shipping chickens (which means some barn work for me), taking a vacation and getting ready for the next batch of chicks. In between I managed treadmill time sporadically, always promising myself to do better next week. Then I suffered through a nasty head cold for several days.

When I finally felt better the treadmill held little appeal. But knowing exercise is good for me, I started with a shorter, less strenuous workout. I was surprised at how out of shape I had become. Red-faced and sweaty after only 20 minutes, one thing was certain: I needed the discipline. It isn't the thrill of standing in one spot and running to nowhere every day that motivates me. It's the knowledge that what I'm putting myself through in the short-term will have long-term benefits. Every time I exercise, things are going on in my body that I can't see and don't necessarily feel right away, but that in the long run, will make a difference.

Unwavering resolve

The same can be said of my spiritual life. My few good habits are sometimes a chore to maintain. At New Year's I like to pick a theme verse for the year and focus on it – memorizing it, meditating on it and applying it to daily life. For 2009 I chose verses from Hebrews 12, "...let us run with endurance the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Then, unlike other years, I promptly forgot about the passage. Or I tried to, anyway. But it kept popping up in Bible studies, devotional reading and conversation. I

began to consider the "cloud of witnesses" mentioned in the opening sentence of the chapter, referring to the Faith Hall of Fame from chapter 11 – those who had run the race diligently without ever receiving the promise. By comparison, I certainly am a slacker.

I picked up a book by Stephen J. Lawson titled, *The Unwavering Resolve of Jonathan Edwards*. Edwards was a Puritan pastor in Colonial America, remembered as a brilliant theologian and a fiery preacher. As a very young man, he penned seventy resolutions – personal guidelines intended to centre his life on devotion to God. They dealt with everything from time management to personal relationships. His desire, above all else, and in all aspects of his life, was to live to the glory of God.

Falling short

Lawson categorizes the resolutions, expands upon them and often quotes Edwards' own diaries regarding the challenge of carrying them out. What emerges is the picture of a man who fervently loved God and his people, far different from the popular image of Edwards as a cold and judgmental legalist. That being said, half way through the book, I felt nearly overwhelmed by his

dogged determination to serve the Lord.

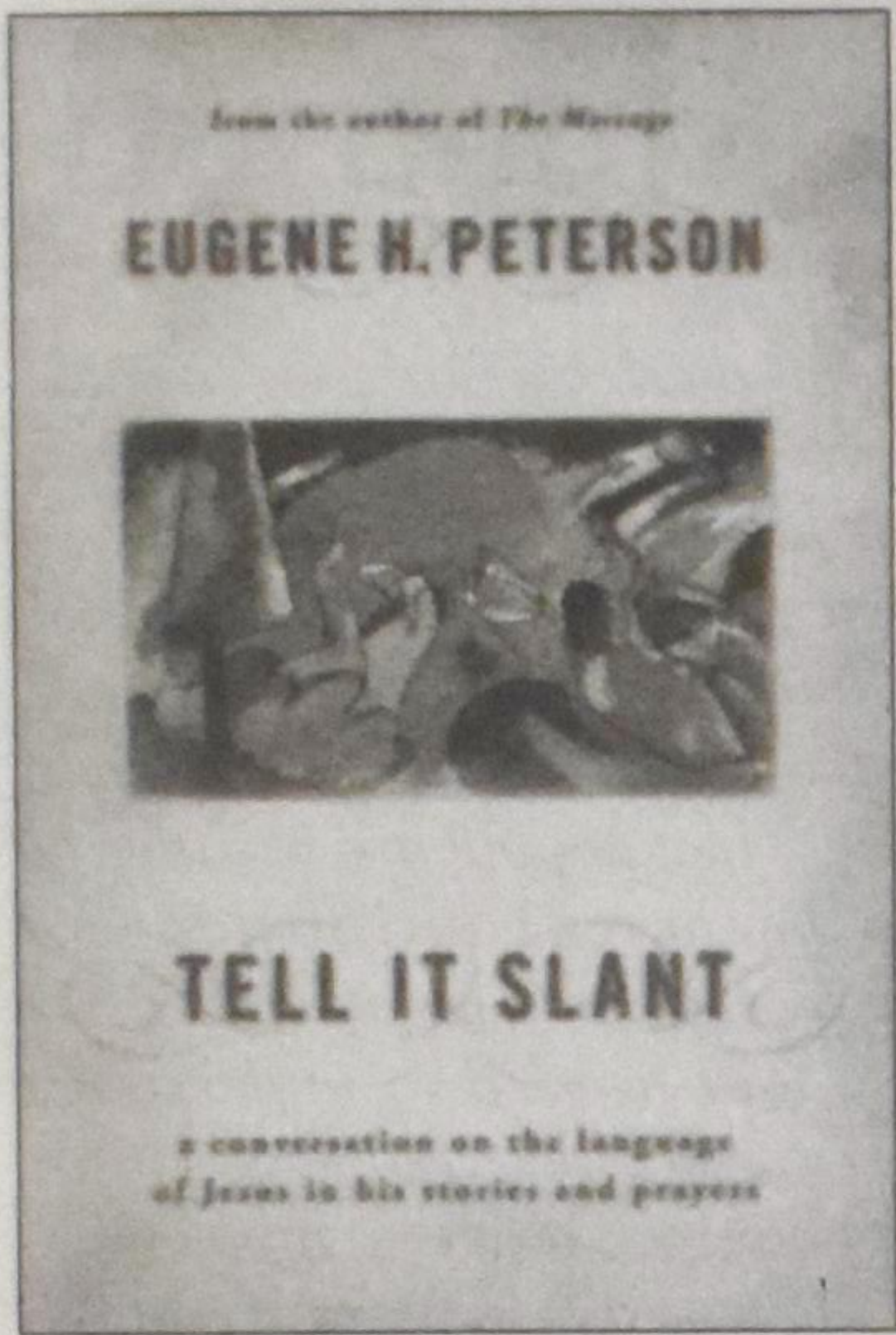
However, I take great comfort in knowing that Edwards, as disciplined and faithful as he was, struggled just as I do. Time and again, because he fell short of his own goals, he returned to the realization that without God's strength, he could accomplish nothing of substance. Ironically, a misdirected pursuit of holiness can lure us away from the very God we wanted to honor. (Much like obsessive exercising for its own sake can interfere with a healthy lifestyle.)

The season of Lent has arrived, and it's a good time for me to consider Christ, "who for the sake of the joy set before him endured the cross." All my puny religious acts could never add to his all-sufficient work of grace. And yet, because of what he accomplished, I am called to run the race with perseverance, one foot in front of the other, knowing it serves a higher purpose, believing that each time I stumble, Christ himself will pick me up and dust me off. Sometimes the hardest part is just stepping onto the treadmill.

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Reviews



Tell It Slant by Eugene H. Peterson (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008)

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

This fourth volume in Peterson's spiritual theology series is, as the subtitle states, "a conversation on the language of Jesus in his stories and prayers."

According to Peterson, language is "constantly at risk." The purpose of language is to glorify God, to receive his revelation, to witness to his truth, and to offer praise to him. However, sinful humans often reduce it to "godtalk."

To prevent this sacrilege from occurring, Peterson continues to expound on a theme he explored in a previous book, *Eat This Book*, namely that "there is no 'Holy Ghost' language used for matters of God and salvation and then a separate secular language for buying cabbages and cars." His goal is to "tear down the fences that we have erected between language that deals with God and language that deals with the people around us." He does this by attentively and prayerfully listening in on how Jesus talks, not when he is preaching and teaching, but as he speaks informally and casually in everyday conversations.

Telling it slant

The first part of *Tell It Slant* focuses on the gospel of Luke because that narrative has "the most extensive revelation of Jesus using this casual and unstructured language." Peterson takes readers through what has been called the Travel Narrative (Luke 9:51 – 19:44), ten chapters that show Jesus using informal language with his disciples and followers alike.

As Jesus travels through Samaria, he tells his followers parables – stories that will prepare them "to bring the ordinariness of their lives into conscious awareness and participation in this kingdom life." Peterson points out that Jesus doesn't do what

The everyday language of Jesus

we are so prone to do when we feel the urgency of sharing the gospel. We use intense language as we preach at people, failing to listen to them and reducing them to a cause. Jesus, however, "tells it slant" with parables – not straightforwardly, but in a way that catches people unawares, startling them and making them ask, "What is this doing here?"

Two parables

In what ways do Jesus' parables show us how to use language by "telling it slant?" Allow me to share Peterson's observations about two parables.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus shows that "neighbour is not a definition." Rather, it is a "new creature." We are new creatures as we learn to live as the neighbours God wants us to be. In other words, as we live with Jesus, "life is not a discussion group" on how to be a neighbour. It is "an act of becoming" a neighbour.

In the parable about the friend who went to another friend in the middle of the night to get bread for an unexpected guest (Luke 11:1-13), Peterson says that Jesus teaches that "prayer, speaking and listening to God, is no more 'spiritual' than the words and silence we employ to get along in the world and with one another." If we talk differently with our friends than we do with Jesus, we are desecrating language, according to Peterson.

One of the themes Peterson explores in his book is that "a great deal of Spirit-inspired, or Spirit-accompanied, language takes place when we do not know it, whether it comes from our own mouths or the mouths of others." Christians who become attuned to listening to and listening for that language in their ordinary conversations will be encouraged in their faith.

Tell It Slant, which also delves into six of Jesus' prayers, celebrates the way our Lord used language and is a call for Christians to treat language as the God-given gift that it is.

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema is a freelance writer living in St. Catharines, ON. She has recently published her first children's picture book, *Monzi and Mama's Stories*, copies of which can be ordered at sonyavf55@hotmail.com.

The curious case of Slumdog Millionaire

In some ways, the 81st Academy Awards followed the typical Oscar-night script: there was a song-and-dance number at the beginning, a couple of memorable one-liners, a few moments of absurdity, and a relatively small film came out of nowhere to win multiple awards after stealing the hearts of North American movie audiences.

But the film itself – *Slumdog Millionaire* – is anything but typical. And the fact that a British film, set in India, featuring sympathetic Muslim characters should achieve any kind of success in the United States would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

Imagine if *Slumdog Millionaire* had been released in 2002 rather than 2008. Imagine if it had shown up in the aftermath of 9/11 and the start of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Clearly, it would have had a much more difficult road to the Oscar podium.

So is the success of a movie like *Slumdog* proof that the world has changed? Have we become more tolerant, and open, and accepting of differences – even differences of religion – since 2001?

Two forces

The short answer is yes ... and no. For a more complete answer, we need to take a little trip back to 1992, and revisit a prophetic article by political scientist Benjamin Barber entitled "Jihad versus McWorld."

Barber's thesis, in a nutshell, is that there are two forces at work in the world. The first, which he calls "Jihad," isn't about religion, per se (in fact, he later regretted using the word at all, because it is so loaded). Barber uses it as a shorthand to describe political, cultural or religious movements that emphasize tradition or traditional values. The second term, McWorld, describes globalization, increased corporate control and influence, and the spread of technology.

He said – way back in 1992 – that our world would be pulled in two directions simultaneously.

On the one hand, we would be driven to seek connection with others in smaller and smaller networks of likeminded people. On the other, we would be driven to reach out and make connections with a greater number of people in ever-increasing networks.

In other words, Barber predicted our unique moment in history. In the 21st century, we have the ability to reach across the globe in an instant, and yet the very ability to do so sometimes makes us retreat into smaller and smaller communities. And as the forces of globalization make themselves felt on small communities, those communities react. At their worst, they do so violently. At their best, they offer something new and beautiful that makes its way



into our global culture.

Many paradoxes

Barber's thesis explains a lot.

It explains a paradox of terrorism: why countries that are home to vast multinational companies are also home to terror cells. It explains a local, cultural phenomenon that suddenly takes the world by storm, such as Irish dancing did a number of years ago.

It explains the paradox of online communities like Facebook: a website that taps into the vast power of the web to span the globe, but links together only those who already know each other in some way, and share some previous connection.

It explains a certain paradoxical immigrant community from the Netherlands – generations old and straddling the US and Canada – with its own churches, schools and newspapers, whose members are involved in arts, culture, politics, business and finance on a global scale, and yet still sing "Ere Zij God" in the original Dutch at Christmas.

And it explains the curious case of *Slumdog Millionaire*.

A story about a Muslim, a minority oppressed by a Hindu majority, the victim of economic and political circumstances beyond his control, who is forced to take matters into his own hands to make his way in the world.

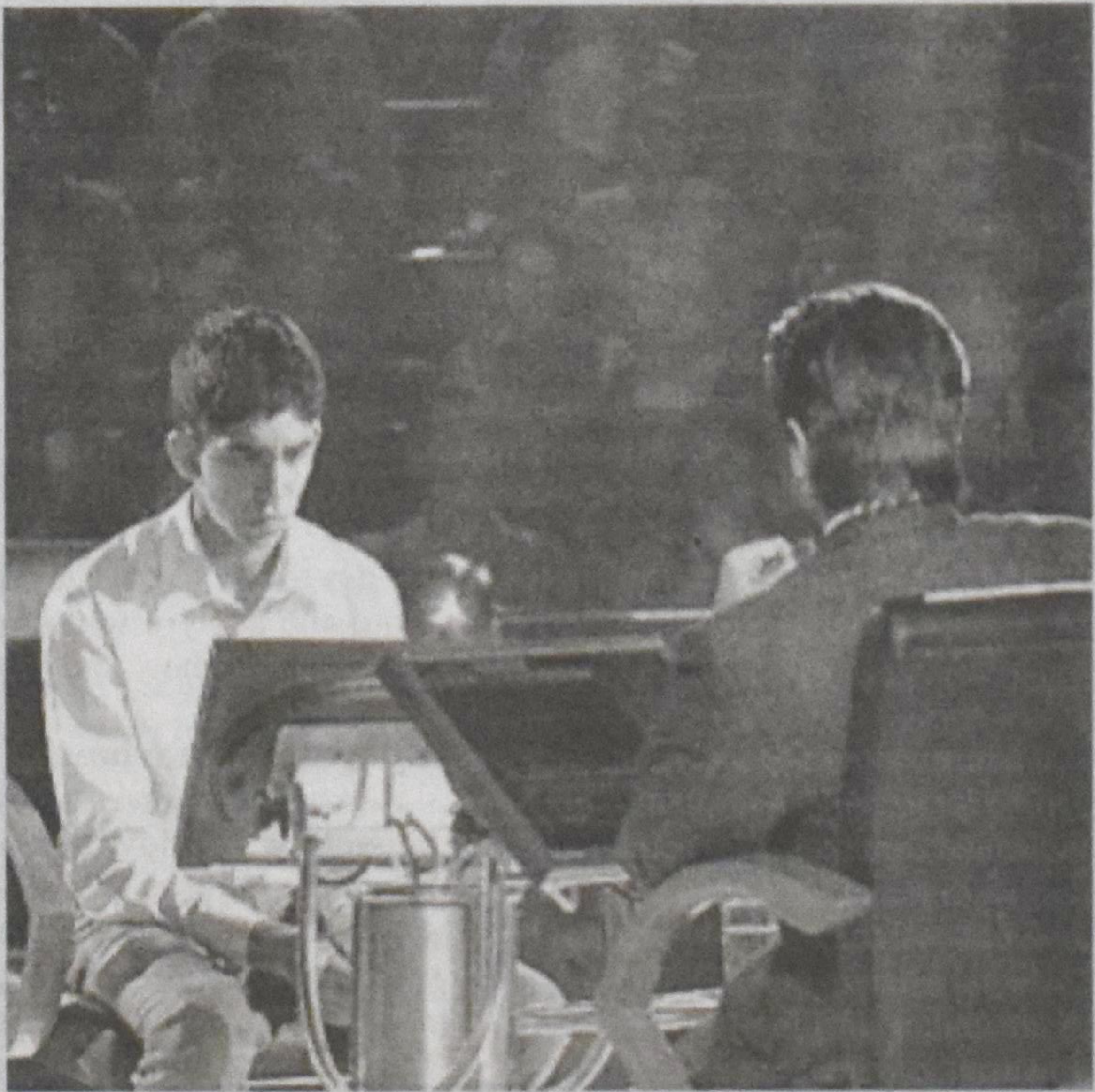
It's a story that goes on to be the biggest movie in the world.

That story, in some ways, is our story.

The story of what it's like to be a citizen of the 21st century world.

A place that is both very large, and very small, at the same time.

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Family

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra



It doesn't make sense

For sad reasons I had to recently explain to my children that a married couple close to them and loved by them have decided to separate. My children are ages 2, 5, and 6. I thought it might be a difficult concept for them to understand for a host of reasons; they are young, they thankfully haven't encountered a couple close to them separate before, and, most prominently, they have lost their mom to cancer just over a year ago. I wondered how they would take the news and what questions would come from them. I knew that separation, the human kind, wasn't on their radar and neither did I think that it should have been.

I procrastinated telling them for a couple of weeks but felt that they needed to hear this information from me first. We spoke during supper. I explained to the kids that sometimes when people get married, they don't get along. So they don't stay together. Our oldest, a six-year-old son, quickly said, "That doesn't make sense."

I told myself to take another angle and put it in terms that he would understand. I explained that, sometimes, when he and his

sister fight, there needs to be a separation between siblings so that they can regain peace and calm. I tried to relate that to this situation. I said that, sometimes, when people are together and they fight, they go away from each other and decide to live in different houses.

My son repeated himself. "That doesn't make sense."

I have often thought that my son is smart for a six-year-old. Even though this is an emotional issue, I thought that if I explained it a couple more times, he would be sure to understand. I thought to myself, *Try another angle so that he will understand.*

I said that, sometimes, when a mom and a dad can't get along and can't live together without fighting and arguing, they decide that it is better for them to separate and not see each other anymore.

He was getting annoyed. He was clearly saying to me that whatever my explanation of separation was, it wouldn't make sense to him. So he repeated, "It doesn't make sense." I was quiet for a moment. He



looked at me. He had stopped eating. It looked like he was waiting for me to say something else.

I thought to myself, *No wonder he thinks this doesn't make sense. He recently had to come to understand that his mom isn't coming back. He had to accept that, although we had a year of hoping, wishing and praying that she would be cured of*

cancer, she still died. He had to recognize that, while we would have done anything to have kept his mom for another day, it didn't happen. I became aware that to him people "voluntarily" separating was not going to make sense. What makes sense to him is that, when people are breathing, married and they haven't died from cancer then, of course, they stay together.

It was me that needed to understand something. I finally realized that I was not going to convince him that this would make sense. He was still looking at me. He was waiting for an answer. I said, "You are right, it doesn't make sense."

He went to reach for his milk. Just before he took a sip, he looked over his cup at me and said, "I told you that already."

Mendelt Hoekstra (mendelt.hoekstra@gmail.com) is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization owned and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives in Vineland, ON with his three children.

From Toddlers to Teens

by Denise Dykstra



We're being observed

Our kids have always been good sleepers. Too good, I guess. It came as a shock to us when child number five rolled around. Damien is three years old. He *can* sleep through the night, he knows he *should* sleep through the night, but he doesn't seem to be able to stop himself from taking a little peak at us at three or four in the morning.

A few weeks ago I heard Damien call for me – again – and I'd had enough. I jumped out of bed and stormed into his room ready to give him a piece of my mind. He knew I'd be mad. He sat huddled on the far corner of his bed, clutching fistfuls of blankets around him, and before I could say anything he folded his little hands, held them out to me, and blurted: "Mom, I need to pray." Oh, he's smart! How could I get mad at that? He may be only three but already he knows what's important to me.

We've all heard the saying "children learn what they live." But have we really absorbed the concept? Are we consciously aware that our actions teach our kids what we value – and that our kids are always watching?

Godly example

Role modeling is the most effective parenting tool we have at our disposal. Our behavior sets the standard for our children's behavior. This can be a scary notion: as sinful creatures we are far from

ideal examples to follow. But with some forethought and self-control – and the greatest role model of all pointing us in the right direction – we can confidently show our little ones how we want them to conduct themselves.

The Bible guides us in our role modeling by giving us the two greatest commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39) By tending carefully to our relationships, we commit ourselves to these commands and give our children a godly example to follow.

When our relationship with our Saviour is characterized by love, our kids see us glorify God in all we do. They're aware that our worship isn't reserved for Sunday morning or nightly prayers; it's evident in our day to day lives. They see us study the Word and apply it to ordinary situations, and they learn how to do the same.

Generous behaviour

Loving the Lord our God is also expressed by our love for our neighbors. When our kids see us obeying the second greatest commandment, they observe our respect and appreciation for all God's people, regardless of age, race, or status. They see us encourage others, care for others in practical ways, forgive others, and

do unto others as we'd like done unto us. (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31) They see how two people in love treat each other, how friends support each other, how strangers on the street are pleasant to each other.

In our house we call loving our neighbor being "kind and generous." And our kids don't hesitate to point out when we're not being a good example. Both my husband and I have been reprimanded for using bad language, losing our temper, not speaking respectfully, and not turning the other cheek. And that's okay, because it means our kids are learning to be discerning – and because it keeps us on our toes.

Kids are great copycats but they're also great at spotting a fake. They have the ability to distinguish between when parents walk the talk and when they only talk a great game. A little reminder from them helps us to be extra careful to practice what we preach. It also gives us the opportunity to model to our kids the way God's children should behave when they make a mistake. When we slip up and curse the driver who just cut us off, we can willingly admit our fault, express sorrow over our wrong-doing, apologize sincerely, and thank God once again for his never-ending grace.

Being a good role model is an effective way to teach our kids. We can even be a good example when we make mistakes. So before we worry about how our kids are



behaving, let's take a close look at how we ourselves are acting.

Denise Dykstra (dykstras@telus.net) is a stay-at-home mom of five kids – three biological and two adopted – ranging in age from 14 to 3. She is a freelance journalist who lives in Edmonton, Alberta.



Kuyper

Outpouring of the force of authentic divine life (Part II)

I will pour out my spirit on all people
Joel 2:28

Abraham Kuyper

We cannot and should not avoid the obvious question, whether the Holy Spirit also comforted *the saints in the Old Testament*. If so, was the Pentecost event really so special?

We could simply dismiss these questions by calling to mind Jesus' own words, "if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come unto you." [John 16:7] Or, we can turn to Scripture's own interpretation of this text, "... the Holy Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet glorified." [John 7:39]

However, we realize that even these words may be like an empty noise to many readers, so we do need to go back to the question.

We may take as point of departure that which every Christian confesses, namely that all the saints of the Old Testament had the same need for salvation as we, and that they, like us, could only receive new life through the grace which is from Jesus Christ, and were made alive in him on earth and sanctified in him after they died.

Same need, different means

Yet, now that we have clarity on these essential points and recognize that their situation was the same as ours we may still ask whether God in his sovereignty was in any way limited in how he could accomplish his work at that time, any more than he is now.

Even now, in the days of the New Covenant do we not recognize clearly that the Lord God follows different ways of gathering those little children who died soon after they were born, from the way he calls us to himself and in whom he works out his salvation at a later age?

Why then should anyone dare to deny that the Lord our God could have used different ways and different means to bring those saints to himself who lived before Christ, from the way he now comforts his people after the appearance of Christ?

Surely there is still a difference between "promise" and "fulfillment"?

Is there no distinction between living in the period of the "salvation of Israel" and that of "grace that encompasses the whole world"? And is there not a world of difference if one lives in an age of "miracles," or in a time of gradual, quiet, spiritual development?

If we acknowledge these enormous differences, there can be no doubt in our hearts that the very same Almighty God who had called into being that temporary situation of the family of Israel, can also determine his own ways to give them the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and to do so in a manner appropriate to the limited revelation of that time.

A flood from heaven

Don't we know, that the inspiration of the prophets reflects the miraculous and glorious work of the Holy Spirit in an altogether different way, from the work of the Spirit in our soul? And is it really unthinkable that such a manner of direct inspiration was also used by the Spirit to enlighten our forefathers in the faith?

We read of such a working of the Spirit in Balaam [Num. 22:5] and Saul, even without saving power. And we notice the power of this work of the Spirit in the life of a Bezaleel [Ex. 31:2], and in Joshua, even when it operated for what we might consider non-spiritual concerns.

And in that period of the old covenant we find many claims which expressed clearly and specifically that something completely different and better will happen, as in the prophets, when we read, "I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring" [Is. 44:3], "will I pour out my Spirit" [Joel 2:29], "and afterward, will pour out my Spirit on all people." [Joel 2:28], "and I will pour out ... a spirit of grace and supplication" [Zach. 12:10].

Note the strong language of "pouring out" in these promises in stark contrast to the "few drops" of the gifts of the Spirit in Old Testament times. In comparison with that, the outpouring of the Spirit after Easter is like a flood from heaven.

In the Scriptures the Holy Spirit does not hide from us the great contrast between "then" and "now." Indeed, the Apostle Paul describes the transition from the period of the Old Testament, where God's focus was limited to Israel, when he writes, "...which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" [Eph. 3:5].

A new and brighter light

If we take a closer look at the difference, it is not that difficult to see. We might compare the former period to someone's standing at the top of the stair of a basement and shining a little light down into it, illuminating just a few spots, and the later could be compared

to taking a torchlight right into the basement and illuminating all its dark corners.

Or again, the difference is not unlike feeling a few drops of rain, instead of the spring runoff from several feet of snow leading to a river running over its banks and onto the fields along its path.

So, I ask you, seriously, are these not good examples of the contrast between the working of the Holy Spirit in the old compared to the new covenant?

For under the old covenant we note only a dim light shining from above, enlightening only a few people whom God called into his service. But since the coming of Jesus we experience the enlivening and comforting light, shining into the dark cellars of our misery, to illumine us with direct, full and glorious brilliance of his majesty.

Under the old covenant only a few drops of rain fell down; but with the rising of the Sun of Righteousness the snow on the mountains has melted into a stream of living water, flowing to all the nations.

A more suitable metaphor may be to compare the times of the Old Covenant to the digging of a new canal, through which in time all the surrounding fields will be irrigated to produce rich crops. Only with the coming of the Son in this world is the work complete, the dam breeched, the waters fill the canal, and we speak of the Spirit being poured out.

The miracle of Pentecost

What, after all, is the real miracle of Pentecost? It is not the pouring out of the Spirit into the hearts of a *few people*? That happened in the Old Testament times as well. It still happens to a sinner who repents and is reborn.

The outpouring of the Spirit is not just a disturbance of the waters using more or less force to create a few waves in the stream. For there have been times when the Spirit seemed to be stuck in the marshy backwaters of that stream while there were also times of spiritual revival in the Church of Jesus Christ after Pentecost, and throughout the ages.

So if we really want to comprehend the miracle of Pentecost, understand and adore

it, we must not just look to the conversion of the Apostles, nor even to the spiritual awakening of all who were gathered that day; we must recognize Pentecost as an event that had never happened before, and one that could not have happened earlier, for it was an event as unique as the coming of the Christ child at Christmas, and the resurrection of Jesus from the grave.

This approach to Pentecost is not the result of pious investigation or human ingenuity, but simply the revelation of the Word, which tells us, there are not just a few individual believers, but an entire church of Jesus Christ; the believers were built up to become a coherent organic entity, united by divine design. This congregation grew up into a unity with her Mediator, and with him she has been one living Body through whom Christ moves, and through whose arteries his blood of life is flowing. As Head of this Body our Mediator moves, feeds and directs his Church.

The congregation of the new covenant

Of course Jesus knows and loves each individual even the least among those whom he has chosen. Yet he chooses, knows and loves these "little ones" especially, as living stones of *the holy temple*, and as living parts of *his sanctified body*, integrating and indwelling with *his Bride*, whose arrival he awaits with tender longing, to welcome her to the mansions of eternal light. Even among the people of Israel, the Mediator had a prototype of that congregation as an organism, and the hidden structure of his sacred body, that was to come and rise up as the temple of the Lord. Israel was not yet truly that congregation. Indeed, God's intentions were much richer, much grander and far more merciful.

This congregation of the new covenant was to encompass all nations and the dimensions of this organism were to equal the dimensions of the whole world. The size of his holy body had to correspond to the population of the whole earth. The cedars for this temple of the Lord would be brought together from all the mountains of the nations. This, the apostle Paul tells us, was the scope of God's plan, the council of his good pleasure, and his glorious intention.

All the preceding ages represent the work of preparation to accomplish this plan. Only when all the preparatory work was completed at Jesus' Ascension and "the fullness of time had come" [Gal. 4:4], could the doors open for that temple of God into which the Holy Spirit would descend; only then could the Holy Spirit be poured out as a stream in the channel which Jesus had prepared as his community of believers.

This meditation by Abraham Kuyper has been translated by Jack Van Meggelen (jack@vanmeggelen.ca), who lives in Wiltondale, Ontario.



Life Story

Pit of despair to beacon of hope

Gertie Pool

Irene Hawsworth spent eight years living on the streets of Victoria, Los Angeles and Vancouver. How did Irene get to travel this dark lonesome road of misery?

At five years of age Irene was forced to make a grown up decision when her alcoholic father lined his four children up against the wall. He told them that they were going to live separate lives and each had to pick with whom they wanted to stay. Irene and her three-year-old sister chose to stay with their mother, a decision that would affect her for years to come.

Two weeks later, her father came back home to stay. Remembering those days, Irene says, "He held a resentment to me and my little sister so we got the abuse all the time. We tried to show him that we loved him still but nothing we did was ever good enough for him." The abuse continued. At age thirteen, when her father beat her with a stick, Irene escaped through a bedroom window never to return. She joined a traveling Carnival caravan in Campbell River where she earned twenty-five cents out of every dollar she made for them.

When Irene had major surgery at age twenty, she was sent home from the hospital on Demerol for the pain. When the Demerol ran out, her sister gave her a shot of heroine for the pain. "That day my whole life changed," she now remembers. "I was hooked. I lost all I had. My job, home, my friends and all of my money." She met a drug dealer and learned how to be a con-artist. For the next eight years Irene was in and out of jail. "Every time I got out of jail I had the intention of cleaning up my life. But I always convinced myself that I could just have one shot. Once I had one, I could not stop and years would go by on the street again."

"What most people do not understand is that addicts are terribly afraid to wake up sick in the morning. It is absolutely horrible. It is as if an ice cold blanket is thrown over you and you cannot get warm again. But unless you feed your drug habit, you go through horrible pains from the withdrawal. What addicts do most of the day is find ways to have that next fix handy for when they wake up in the morning. Your only goal in life is to not to have to go through withdrawal. That means if you live on the streets, and don't have to pay rent, you have more money to buy heroine. If you have to sell your body to get money for drugs you do that too. Fears of having to go through a withdrawal is one of the scariest things



The Downtown Eastside streets of Vancouver are a transitional home for thousands. Found there is the highest HIV infection rate in North America, affecting 30 per cent of the local population, mainly women. Pictured is Hastings Street.

ever. My biggest fear always was if I had enough to keep me going. So I start robbing and beating people. Next thing you know I was in jail again. Every time I got out of jail I'd tell myself that I would get myself a job. But I didn't have enough self esteem to look people straight in the eye. I was filled with shame."

Life on the street

Living on the streets means slowly dying away. It is cruel, harsh, unsafe, cold and lonely. "I remember one Christmas day I stood on the corner of Hastings Street (Vancouver) where there was a church. Lights were on. I heard singing, and everything within me wanted to go there. But I thought I was not good enough to go inside. If someone would recognize who I was they wouldn't want me there. I remember crying all the way up Granville street. I was freezing in my mini skirt and went to an underground parking lot to get warm. A parking lot attendant come along. He shoved me down, and I hit my face on the sidewalk. 'We don't want your kind here. Get lost,' he said.

"This man proved to me that I didn't belong in his society. I thought that what my father always told me – that I was ugly,

fat, stupid and would never amount to anything – must be true. My life on the street continued. When heroine was not enough for me anymore I start mixing cocaine with it."

It was a hard life, but as Irene says, "I never planned my life this way. It all started happening once I began using heroine. Bad dates was a normal thing. I was left for dead more then once. But, somehow, miracles did happen even to me. One time I was kicked in a ditch and left to die alongside a little gravel road outside a town. Then a couple, who had never taken that road before, came along and took me to the hospital. I see now how that these two samaritans were sent from above."

Despite the miracles, Irene always returned to her makeshift home. "I felt at home with the street crowd because I had such low self esteem," she says. "Nobody judged me for what I was doing. I fit right in doing my con thing. I'd rob something from them one day and the next day you'd try to repay them and say you were sorry and everything was forgotten. You don't make friends, you just use people to have your needs met".

Recovery

Eight years later Irene found a remarkable recovery through a former addict who himself had found a better way of life by attending a recovery program in the Matsqui Institution in Abbotsford. He wanted to give Irene the gift that was so freely given him. He took Irene to his friend's place to detox.

Irene went through twelve steps of recovery and eventually asked Jesus to come into her heart. "Once I accepted Jesus into my heart in the basement of this friend's home I knew literally with every fiber of my being that God had touched my life and that he would use all that I've been through to help other women find the true joy of life that I now have.

"He told me absolutely at that moment that this was it. I was never to return to the street again. He told me, 'I am going to use

you to do my work from this day on.' It shocks me every time I think about it. It was not that God took this pretty sweet little girl. He took this cold-hearted, calloused, terrible person that was capable of hurting anyone, and said, 'here, I am going to take your heart right now and change you completely.'

"I can't tell you how grateful I am for the life that I have today. No matter what happens I know that God will stick to his promises. My goals are to model the Christian life to my adopted seven-year old-daughter and help other addicts find a better way of living. I cannot change what I've done to others. The only way that I can make amends for all that I have taken from everyone who came into contact with me is to never hurt another soul and to try to model the joyful life I am now able to live."

Irene owes that life to God and to the man who introduced her to Jesus. "I often think of the time when my friend got married. I told him that I could never repay him for the great life that he showed me how to live. He said to me, 'you go out and do the same for others.' That's what I try to do everyday now. I no longer feel ashamed of my past. I know I have been forgiven. Now, I live in freedom everyday. What a great life!"



Irene today

At thirty one years of age, after recovery, Irene went back to school for three years to become a Registered Professional Drug and Alcohol Counselor. After that she worked at Mission Harmony House and eventually opened a recovery home in Surrey.

It has now been nineteen years since her life on the street. Irene has worked as an in-reach worker in prisons, encouraging prisoners towards lifestyle changes. After five years of being clean the Government cleared Irene of all criminal records. Irene and her adopted daughter regularly attend church services each week in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Gertie Pool lives in Abbotsford, BC.

Community / Advertising

More Than a Degree

Nicole Vandenberg

"You went WHERE?!"

It's that question again. My forehead wrinkles. My eyes dart from right to left. I can't decide which pre-formulated answer fits best into this particular situation.

"Dordt College," I reply, and before the woman can ask me what kind of student a dork school might produce, I quickly add, "You spell it like this: D-O-R-D-T." Extra emphasis on the *t* sometimes helps, but realistically speaking, it takes only two fingers to count the number of times I have met someone outside of my Christian Reformed Church context who has heard of the school. Equally true, if she *has* heard of the place, she appears to be no stranger after all.

I drive with my unfamiliar residence hall neighbour to the grocery store because we both need to eat and only one of us has a car. "No problem, come along," she says and when we return we have more than just bags in hand. I insert a freshly scribbled phone number into my pocket and agree to meet her later that evening for supper.

That's what a community is, after all, the shadow goes along with us, attached at the hip whether we are consistently willing to acknowledge it or not. My college community is no exception. Yet, given the conversations I have had with other Christian school graduates, Dordt College and its sibling institutions seem to be every bit the exception when compared to the experiences of my public school-going friends.

A small group discussion on the sidewalk has turned to heated debate

Thoughts from the afterlife

over whether going to the campus chapel twice a week should be mandatory or not. We question, we argue and we come to no satisfying answers of any kind. We do, however, agree on this one thing: What a great treat it is, having the opportunity to debate with others who care so passionately about issues such as these.

Dare I say that a Christian college experience is the closest thing I have had to community as God may have intended it to be? I will be the first to say that my alma mater, as every other place, has its serious flaws and is far from perfect, but even so, I imagine a perfect world to be something like it.

In the centre of the ceramics classroom stands a carefully sculpted torso of a woman. "Oh, how beautiful the human body is!" exclaims one student.

"You're not planning on showing that in the public gallery, are you? She is going to need a little more clothing if I'm going to let my kid see this," comments another.

One agrees. One disagrees. We sit. We discuss. In this pluralistic, postmodern, anything-goes kind of world, we put our actions on hold for a short while and wonder aloud to each other what the implications of those movements may be.

I am no expert on the details of community life worldwide and I know there are aspects of my college community that needed improvement, but I have to wonder this: Where else in my life might I find such a rich environment of preparing meals together, of sacrificing sleep for the sake of knowing our fellow students wholly, of scraping deeper into the questions of life that make our place in it potentially significant? Who am I? What are WE? Who are those we have yet to meet?

We graduate, launched by ourselves and through each other into the deep wide world. Foreign faces we meet ache for some sense of authentic community, but have lost the directions for finding it. And here we are, with the vision of Christ-centred communal gatherings fresh in our minds. This is not the gift we expected to take from our time together,



Community at Dordt College

but we hold it all the same.

My new acquaintance wrinkles her forehead, confused.

"I went to Dordt College," I repeat, with extra emphasis on the *t* this time. The woman purses her lips, thinks a moment, and explains that she knows of many schools, but that mine is a new one.

"It's worth hearing about," I suggest.

She smiles.

I beam.

She asks another question.

Nicole Vandenberg (nicolevandenberg@sympatico.ca) is a 2006 graduate of Dordt College, living in Norval, Ontario and works as a graphic designer in the Greater Toronto Area.

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Classifieds

Anniversary		Obituaries	
<p>March 18, 1949 ZUIDHORN (Gr.) – March 18, 2009 LISTOWEL, Ontario</p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, the children of</p>  <p>JOLLE AND JANTJE (nee Pikstra) DEVRIES</p> <p>announce the 60th Wedding Anniversary of our parents.</p> <p>Children: Robert (Bouke), Grace & Rainer, John (deceased), Emma & Alan, Louise & Jeff, Jo-Anne & Mark, Dorothy & Bill, Alfred & Joanne, Alice & Byrne, Harold & Kimberly, Gerald Marc & Natasha, 26 grandchildren & 2 great-grandchildren.</p> <p>We will be having an Open House at Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Listowel on Sunday, March 22, 2009 from 2 - 4 p.m.</p> <p>Home address: 795 John St W, Listowel ON N4W 1B6</p>		<p>1923 - 2009</p> <p>ELLEN (Engeltje) KAPINGA</p> <p>passed away peacefully on February 12, 2009 at St. Norbert Personal Care Home in Winnipeg.</p> <p>Engeltje was born on January 19, 1923 to Seitso Jan and Albertje Nanninga in Winschoten, The Netherlands. She was the eldest of seven children. In 1951 Engeltje married Sikko Jan Kapinga and that same year they immigrated to Canada where they became Ellen and John. They lived in Guelph and Toronto, Ontario for 20 years during which time their daughters were born. The family moved to Winnipeg in 1971 but in January 1974 her husband John died suddenly. This was a difficult time for Ellen but with her trust in God and the support of her friends from church and Bredin Drive she enjoyed life again. Following her husband's death she worked at a number of positions, including librarian at Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute. After retirement in 1988, she travelled, visited sick and elderly members of her church and helped with the church library. She will be remembered for her devotion to her family, love of books and plants, her resourcefulness and delectable meals. Her children and grandchildren celebrate her love and support. She will be dearly missed.</p> <p>Left to mourn are three daughters and their families: Jean and Gary with grandson Sean in Halifax; Alice and Herb in St. Catharines; and Margaret and Prasad with grandchildren Matthew and Kiran in Winnipeg. Her two sisters and two remaining brothers in The Netherlands and their families, as well as the Kapinga family in The Netherlands and Australia, also remember her.</p> <p>A special thanks is given to the Covenant Church community for visiting Mum and helping her as she grew frail. We also thank Dr. Anne Kong, her Homecare workers, and the staff of Concordia Hospital and St. Norbert Personal Care Home for all their care and kindness.</p> <p>A memorial service was held on Wednesday, February 18, 2009 at Covenant Christian Reformed Church, Rev. Clarence Bishop officiating. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Hope Centre Ministries, 240 Powers St, Winnipeg MB R2W 5L1. Send expressions of sympathy at www.mem.com.</p>	
<p>Personals</p> <p>I am a single woman in my late 30's living north of Toronto. I am hoping to meet a single man for companionship, adventure, and romance.</p> <p>Reply to File #2765 c/o Christian Courier 5 Joanna Dr St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1</p> <p>Widowed Chr. gentleman living in Southern Ontario would like to correspond with Chr. lady in her 60's-70's.</p> <p>I am very active – like to walk, travel, volunteer and visit with family and friends. Looking for friendship, companionship and possibly marriage. Please send reply to:</p> <p>File #2766 Christian Courier 5 Joanna Drive St Catharines ON L2N 1V1</p>		<p>Vacation Rentals</p> <p>For rent: 2 bedroom, 2 bath guest cottage in Tallahassee, Florida.</p> <p>\$650 per week furnished with linens, close to state park, hiking & biking trails, tennis. Call 850-386-6648</p> <p>Holiday in Holland Beautiful self-contained cottage in Friesland www.chestnutlane.nl</p>  <p>LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA Coming to Alberta? Stay in one of our cozy cottages. Contact Ernst & Louise Sluimers 403-329-8181 www.elbas.com</p> 	
<p>For Rent</p> <p>Spacious 1 bedroom basement apartment approximately 10 minutes west of London in a quiet village setting. Includes use of garage. Call 519-666-1419</p>		<p>MARIA JACOBA PROPER nee VandenBrink</p> <p>Maria Proper died peacefully at her home in Shalom Manor, Grimsby after two weeks of failing health and with her family at her side. The funeral service was in Bethel CRC, Acton, Mom and Dad's church home since April 1960. As a family we remembered Mom and celebrated God's gift of her to us. Their former pastor Rev. Dirk Miedema comforted and encouraged us from God's Word on the theme of God's grace.</p> <p>Mom was known for her love of birds and her interests in other people. Her home in Rockwood was a place of stability for 16 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren. She enjoyed the visit of many of them yet only two weeks before she died. Mom's favourite songs focused on God's grace and his worthiness and glory. She is perhaps now singing "Thou Art Worthy" and "Sing, Choirs of New Jerusalem."</p> <p>She was the loving wife of John Proper for 63 years.</p> <p>Mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother of: Grace & Dick Hockenberry – Ashley of Dayton, Ohio Donald Hockenberry – Donja Anita & Edgar Davis – Elizabeth, Kansas, Teddy, Aaron Herman & Diane Proper of Ancaster Stephanie & Greg VanRooyen – Janelle, Katelyn, Luke Wendy & Phil Nelson – Nichola, Bethany, Sarah, Lucy Nathan & Karen Proper – Lauren, Kristen Monica & James Mudde – Alexander, Victoria Andrew & Jessica Proper</p> <p>Correspondence: Herman Proper, 591 Sawmill Road RR 2, Ancaster ON L9G 3L1 Phone – 905-648-0604</p> 	
<p>STUDENT RENTAL – St. Catharines, Ont. Clean, well maintained student house in quiet residential area, close to all amenities. On bus route to Brock University. Looking for male students. All inclusive \$400 per month. Call 905 945 4241</p>		<p>MARANATHA HOMES</p> <p>Living independently in Christian community</p> <p>MARANATHA HOMES, located in south Burlington near many amenities, is a place where Christian seniors can enjoy independent living in community with others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reasonable rent rates at \$740 per month• Newly renovated units• Award winning architectural design• Well maintained building and grounds• No condo fees or utility bills <p>All this and more make Maranatha Homes an attractive and affordable accommodation for seniors.</p> <p>For further information contact: Rosanne van der Woerd, 109-3260 New St. Burlington ON L7N 3L4 905-681-0311 Email: rvanderwoerd@sympatico.ca</p> 	
<p>A DUTCH SERVICE will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church March 8 at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Ralph Koops will be preaching.</p> 		<p>SIEBO HAALSTRA of Dunnville, Ontario after a lengthy battle with cancer was called home to be with the Lord in his 79th year on January 28, 2009.</p> <p>Beloved husband of Anna Mae (Andringa)</p> <p>Dear father of Karen Patricia (Jay) Fedorowich Ray Marsha</p> <p>Dear brother of Ralph & Jeanette Haalstra Margaret Kraal Hilda & Albert Anema Clarence & Jenny Haalstra Maynard & Lynn Haalstra Jane Kroesbergen Edward & Donna Haalstra</p> <p>Brother-in-law of Joyce Smith Siebren DeBoer</p> <p>Brother-in-law of Kathy (Andringa) & Russ Voorman</p> <p>Predeceased by His son Paul, parents Maaik & Tenius, brother George & sister Esther Brothers-in-law Hank Kroesbergen and Peter Kraal</p> <p>Memorial service was held on January 31, 2009 at Riverside CRC, Wellandport, Ontario, Pastor Derek Bouma officiating Home address: 7283 Canborough Rd RR1 Dunnville ON N1A 2W1</p> <p><i>It doesn't have to be Christmas to give a gift subscription. The Christian Courier is a great birthday or anniversary gift.</i></p> <p>Our special for new subscribers is now \$35.</p> <p>Contact Rose at 1-800-969-4838 or email rose@christiancourier.ca</p> 	

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Christian Courier is published on the second and fourth Monday of each month. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Wednesday, 12 days prior to publication date.

RATE: (GST added to rates listed) All personal and family announcements: \$6.00 per square inch. rose@christiancourier.ca

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Search Committee, Mountainview CRC,
290 Main St. E., Grimsby ON L3M 1P8

or email: searchcommittee@mountainviewcrc.org.

Further information may be obtained by visiting our website www.mountainviewcrc.org or contacting Annette Klingenberg, chair of Search Committee, at 905-563-5736 (evenings 7pm-10pm EST)

See our website for recently advertised job opportunities. issue dates, deadlines, contact information and more.

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David O'Dell – Principal – Pacific Christian School – Secondary Campus,
654 Agnes Street, Victoria, BC V8Z 2E6

Email: dodell@pacificchristian.ca

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John Siebenga, Principal

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E-mail: hcschool@houstonchristianschool.ca

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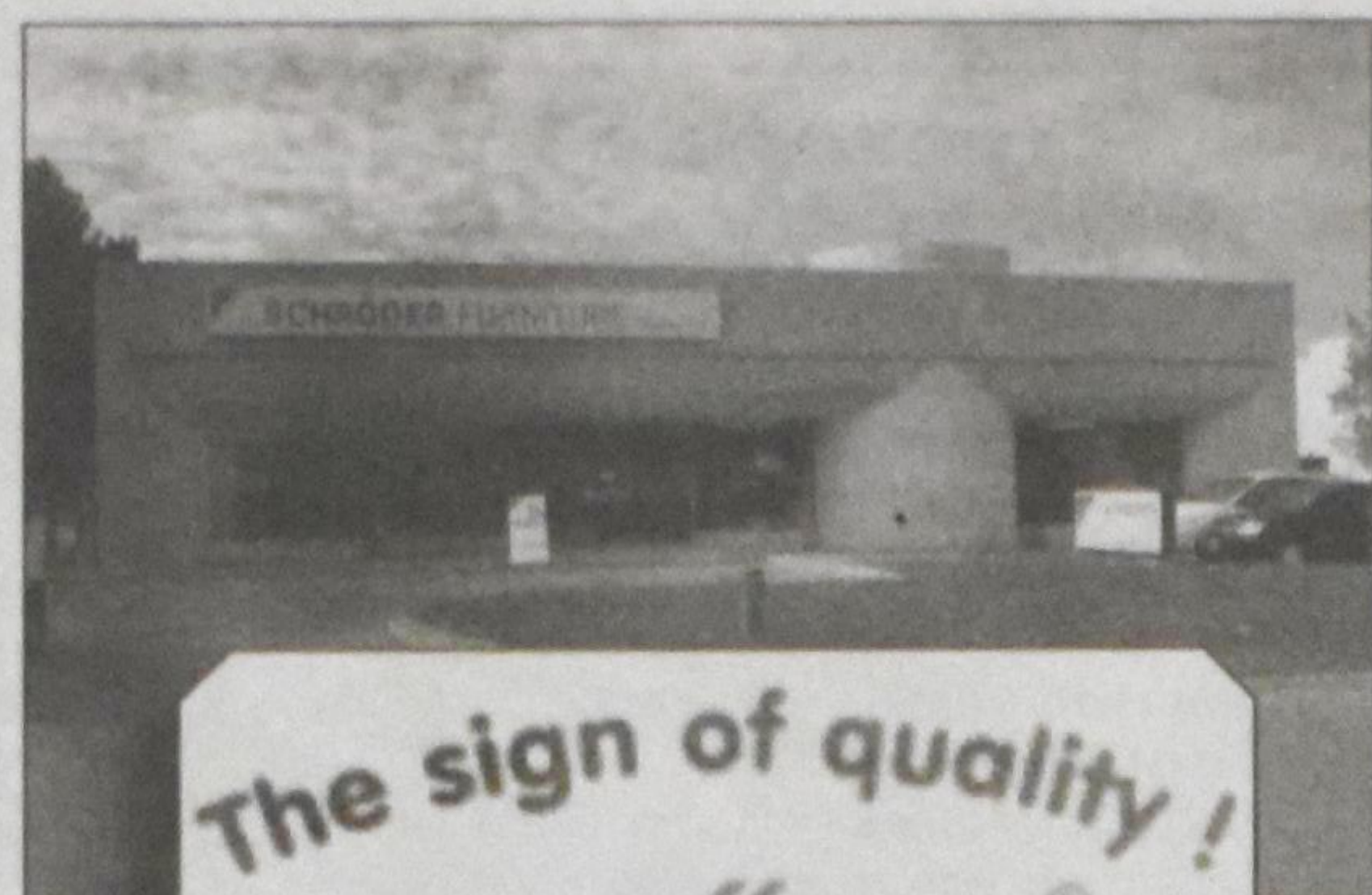
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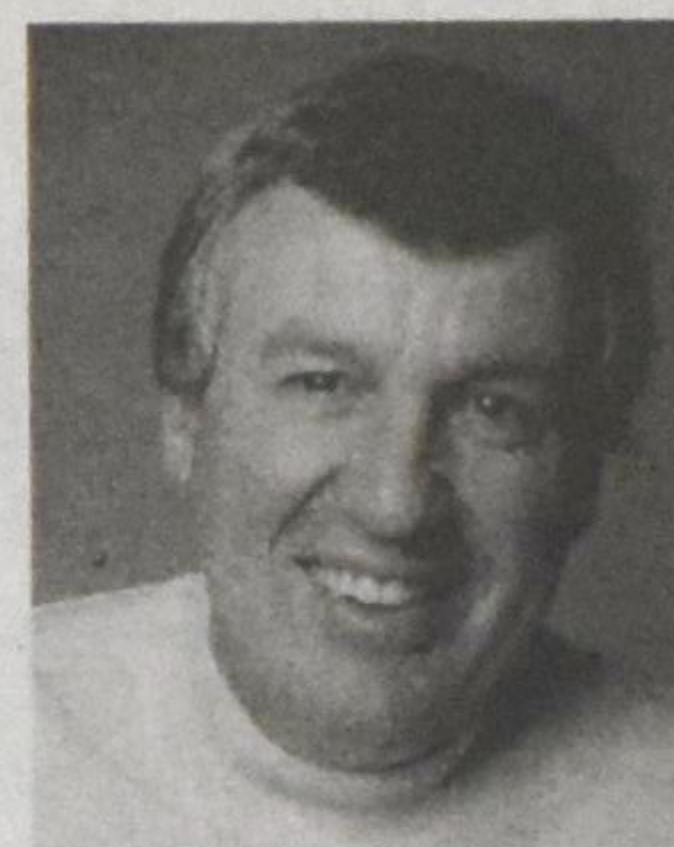
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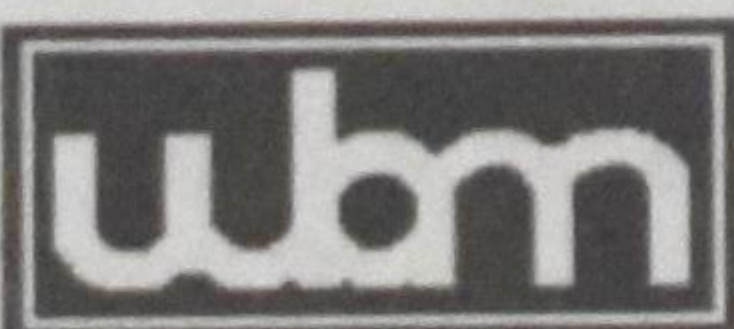
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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Mar 6, 7** The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "Eerlijk of Heerlijk" Market Centre Theatre, 22 Reeve Street, **Woodstock**, Ontario. Admission: \$15 - Advance tickets only. Call 519 283 6285 for more information or see ad Feb 23 issue.
- Mar 8** Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Ralph Koops will be preaching.
- Mar 7** The Annual Inter-Classis Safe Church Abuse Prevention Training Event will take place on Saturday from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Waterloo CRC. /www.scc.wmott.ca
- Mar 27** The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "Eerlijk of Heerlijk" at Great Lakes Christian College in **Beamsville** on Friday at 8 p.m. Call 519 283 6285 for more information or see ad Feb 23 issue.
- Mar 29** The Royal Canadian College of Organists, Windsor and Chatham Centres present Dr. Jonathan Oldenga, Concert Organist, 4:00 p.m. at St. Andrew's United Church, 85 William St. South, **Chatham**, ON., Admission at the door: \$12 Adults; \$10 seniors/students.
- Apr 3** The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents "Eerlijk of Heerlijk" at the London Dutch Canadian Hall in **London** at 8 p.m. Call 519 283 6285 for more information. See ad Feb 23 issue.
- Apr 24-25** Marriage Encounter weekend, **London**, ON. For more information or to register on-line, go to www.reformedme.org or contact Chris & Cindy Otten at 519-393-5163 or by email at Ontario_registration@reformedme.org
- May 23** Combined nine Male Choirs (over 300 voices) from Southwestern Ontario, will present D. V. a Festival of Praise Concert, singing all Sacred mass numbers, at the Centennial Hall, 555 Wellington Street, London, Ontario. Saturday, at time 7:30 p.m. Doors open 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$13.00 from all choir members and host Choir: St. Thomas District Male Choir "Crescendo". For tickets and information please call: (519) 637-4357 or (519) 631-9245 No reserved seating.
- May 30** John Knox Christian School, **Brampton**, would like to invite former students & staff to our 50th Anniversary Celebrations. See ad p. 17 for details.
- May 30,31** First CRC **Sarnia**, Ontario will be celebrating its 75th anniversary. A banquet will be held on Saturday night with special services held on Sunday. All friends and former members are certainly invited and welcome to join. For more information or to order banquet tickets please e-mail us at 1crc75@gmail.com or call the church office at 519-336-8808.

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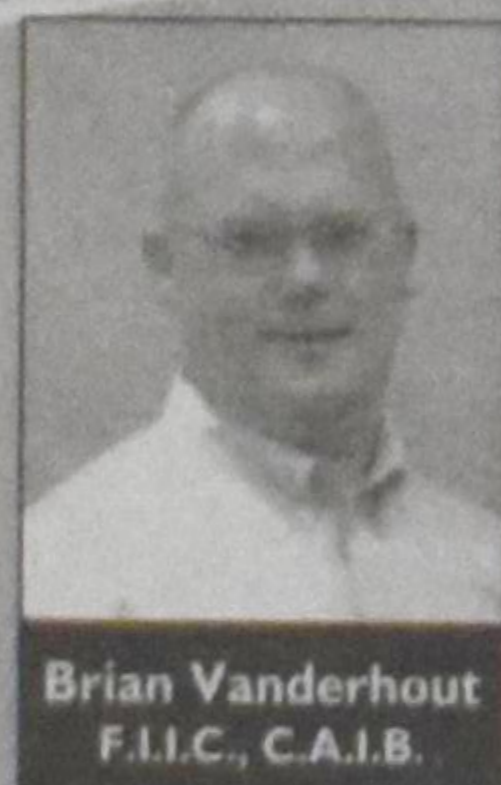


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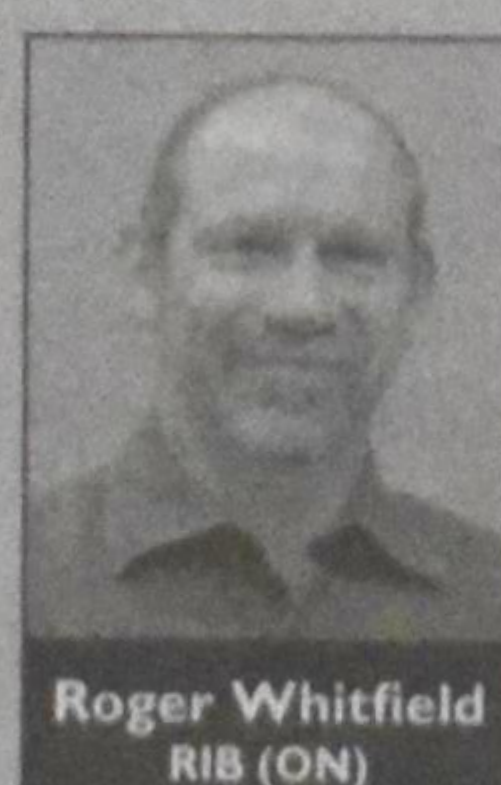
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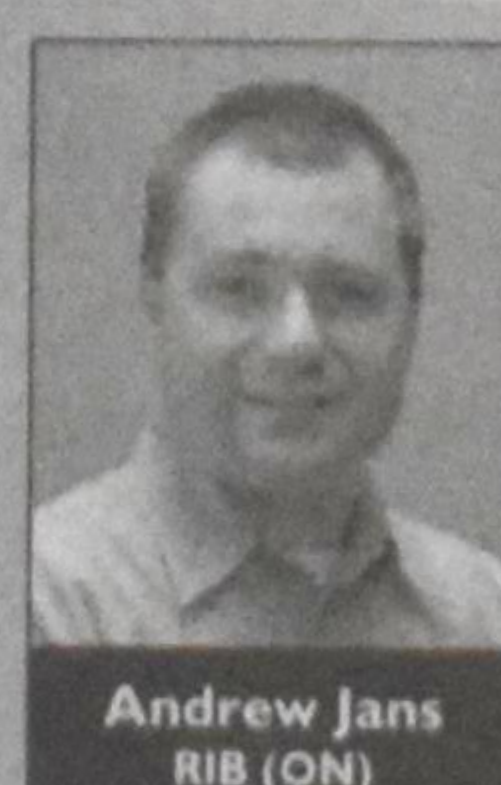
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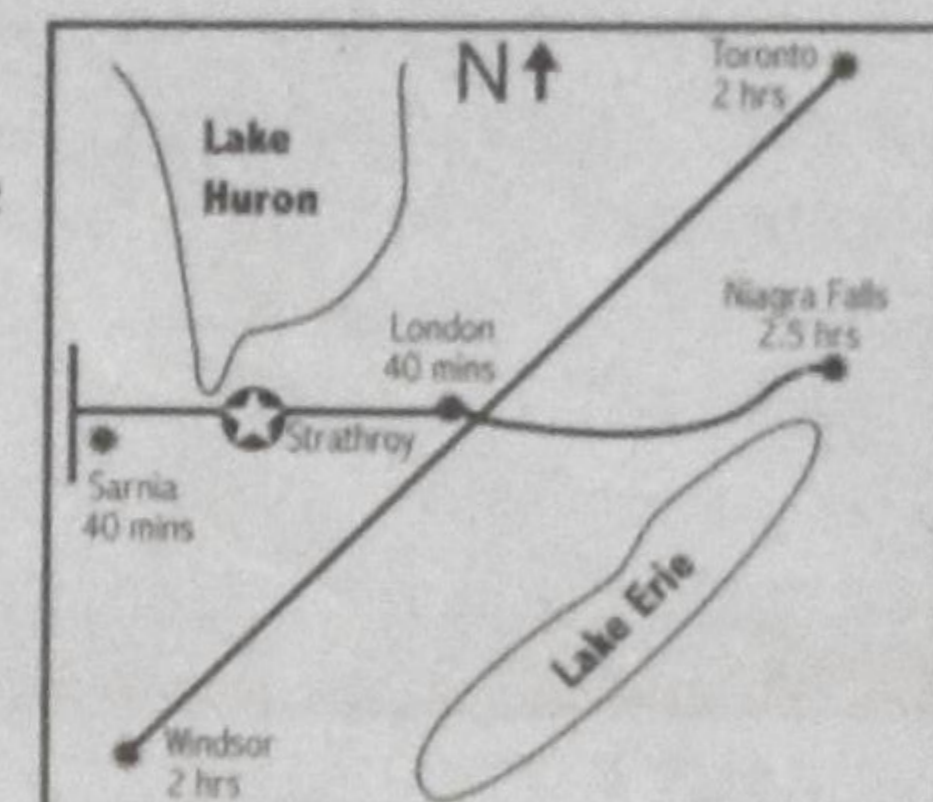
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News

Maple Reinders construction wins national recognition

Brandon Jorritsma

Last month, the results of a study to determine the fifty best small and medium employers, as determined by Hewitt Associates through Queen's University, were announced in the *Globe and Mail*. On the list was Maple Reinders Constructors Limited, a business that may be familiar to readers of CC for its involvement in building projects including King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta, and Hope Christian Reformed Church in Brantford, Ontario.

Founded in 1967 by Fred J. Reinders, Maple Reinders is today a top-twenty Canadian contractor in terms of construction revenue. In addition to building construction, the company specializes in environmental construction work, having completed over four hundred water- and wastewater-treatment and transmission facilities.

The study published in the *Globe* was based on information collected by anonymous surveys of employees at Canadian companies employing 50 to 400 people (Maple Reinders employs approximately 230 people). Beyond reflecting employees' happiness, loyalty, or satisfaction, the study "measures their level of emotional and intellectual commitment to organizational success," says Johan Beukes, representative for Maple Reinders.

CC corresponded with Beukes to learn more about their employee-



King's University College (Edmonton, Alberta)

business relations as well as Maple Reinders' growing reputation for designing and constructing waste management systems.

What are some of the benefits of having a workforce that is committed to its employer's success?

The benefits are that they speak positively about the organization to co-workers, potential employees and clients; they have an intense desire to be part of the company – reducing recruitment costs and turnover disruption – and they exert extra effort in order to do the very best possible job to contribute to the company's success.

Would you characterize your workforce's internal relationship as "family-like"? Is this a significant consideration when hiring?

Yes, we have a family-like environment. Fitting with our culture is a very important consideration when determining who we will hire. We can provide training on skills and knowledge, but generally we cannot significantly change someone's values and ethics. If the candidate does not fit with our culture, we generally will not hire them, even if they have the required skills and knowledge.

What kind of career training and development opportunities are offered to employees?

We offer standard programs, such as the Gold Seal program and LEEDs (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and health and safety certifications that are job specific. We offer apprenticeship programs for our field employees. In addition, we have a Career Development Plan where



employees can set goals for their own personal development, and have a tuition assistance program to help offset the cost of personal development programs.

Are there incentives for exceptional job performance?

We have an incentive program that is based on the success of the project.

Do you find it important to allow your workforce to suggest new ways of executing their responsibilities?

Yes, and we try to encourage this. Our management style is participatory.

Maple Reinders has recently done some "green" projects that deal with waste, water, and recycling. You have won the Canadian Construction Association Environmental Achievement Award twice as well as the OWMA (Ontario Waste Management Association) Waste Management Partnership Award.

Could you briefly outline how this recognition was achieved?

We have been constructing environmental treatment facilities for over forty years and have developed a reputation for integrity and excellence in environmental niche areas such as organic waste composting, water and wastewater design build projects, and energy-from-waste projects. Doing our part in being good stewards of our planet is an important part of our mission, vision and values. We have also been awarded the Canadian Design Build Institute Award of Excellence.

Brandon Jorritsma is currently studying in Ryerson University's publishing program.

To see other projects by Maple Reinders, visit www.maple.ca



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Snapshot

You are invited to submit unusual, timely and original photographs to angela@christiancourier.ca for consideration in this space. Please include a brief paragraph that explains your photo.

This marten showed up at Sunday noon and hung around the bird feeder for fifteen minutes, ignoring the presumably delectable smells coming from our chicken coop.

Martens are members of the weasel group (*Mustelidae*), along with mink, weasels, fishers, badgers, wolverines, ferrets, skunks, and otters. This one – it looks to me like a female – is dark, the furriers' preferred colour.

Photo by Curt Gesch, Telkwa, BC

